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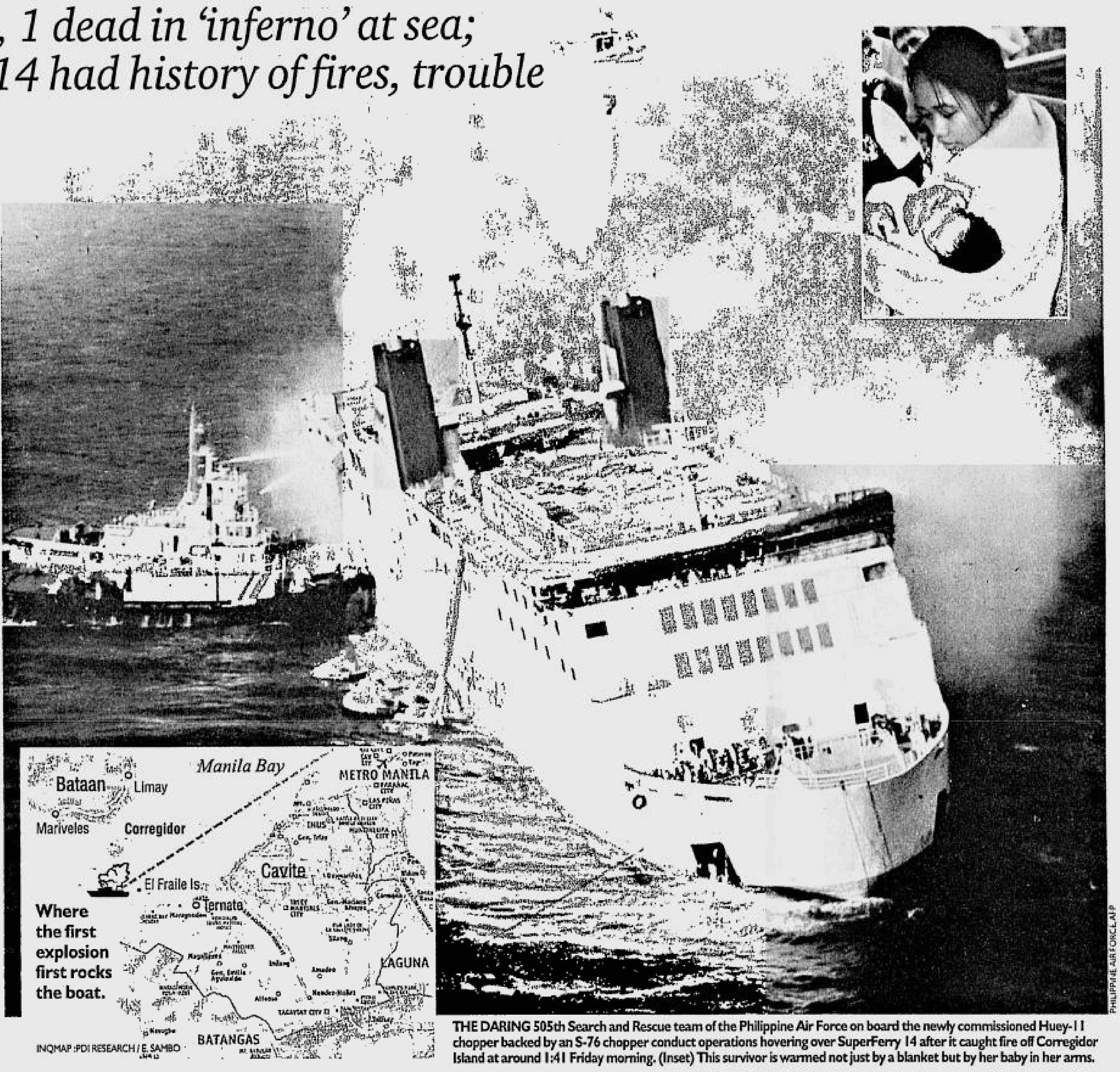

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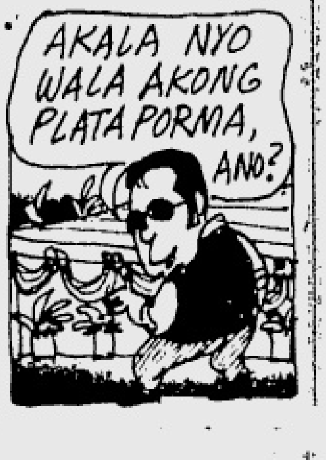

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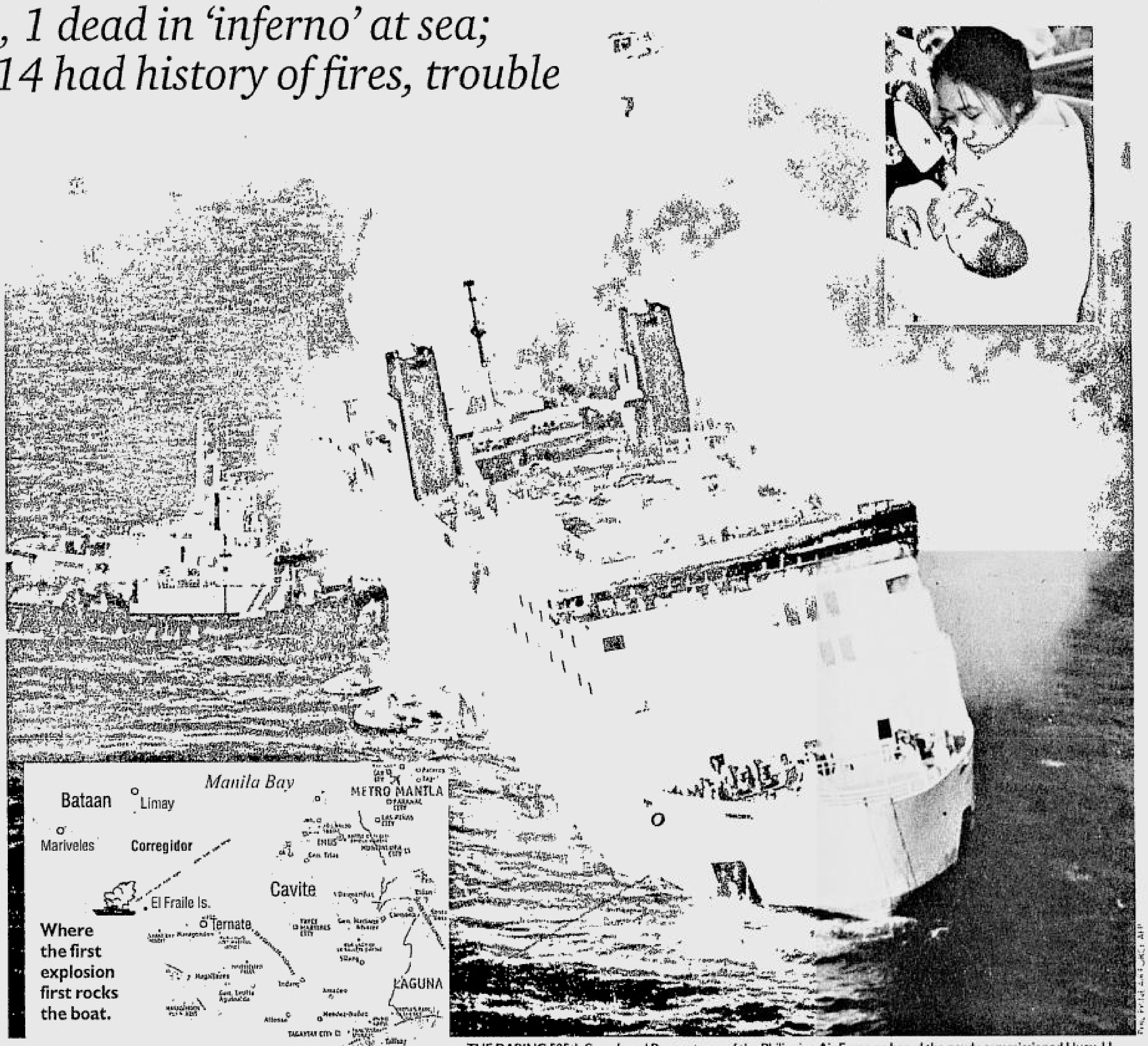

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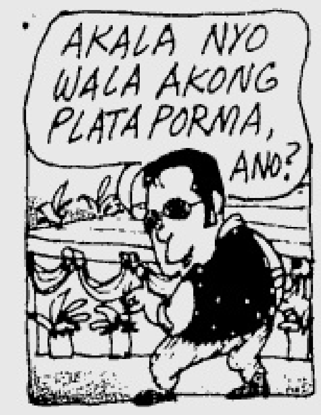
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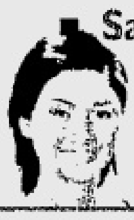

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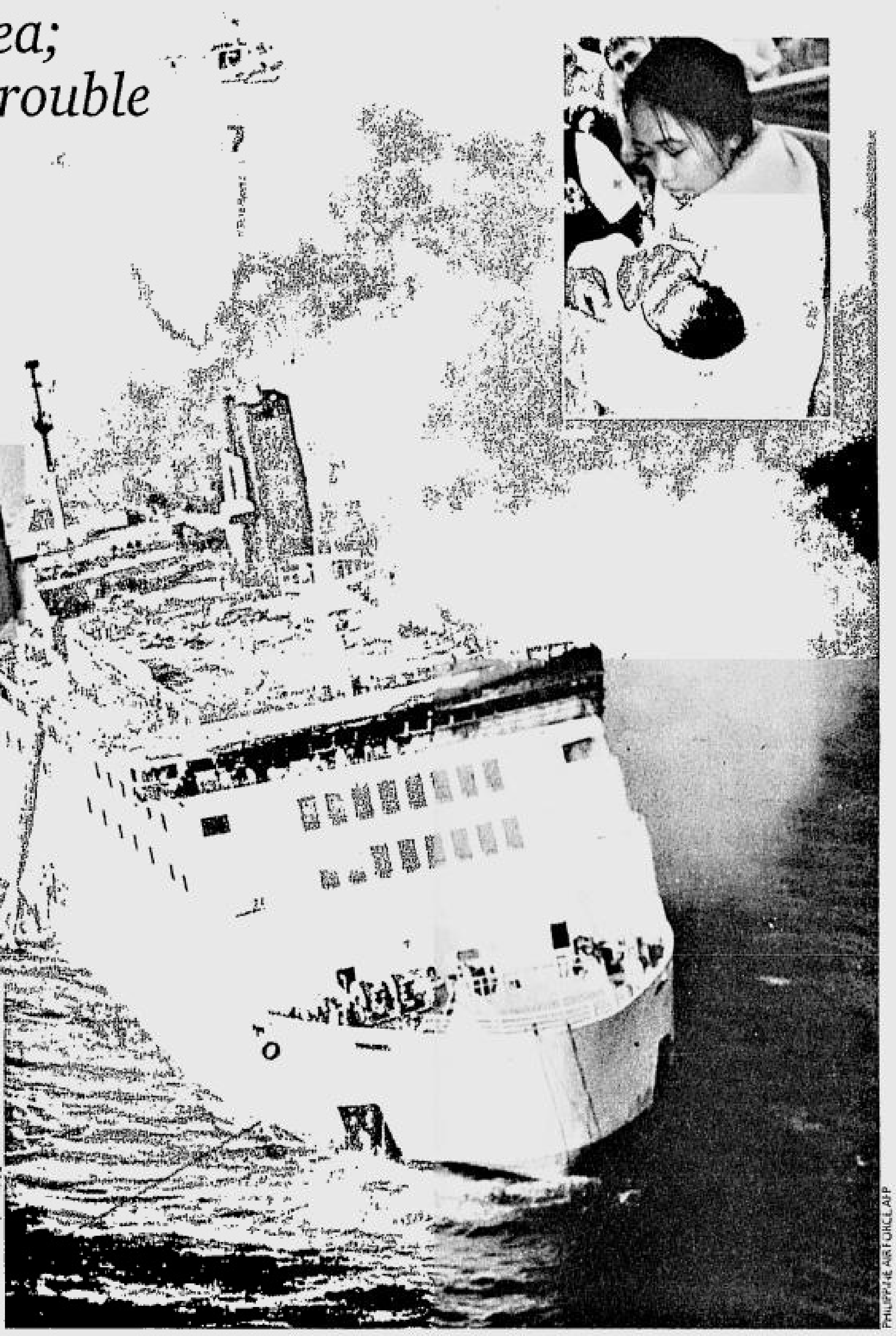

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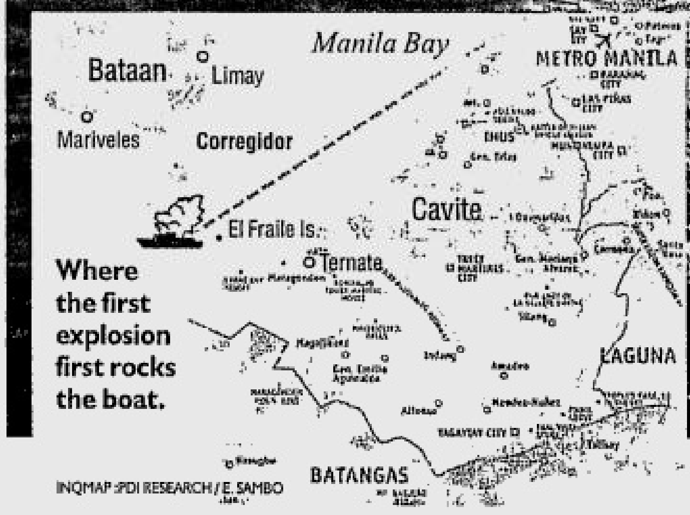

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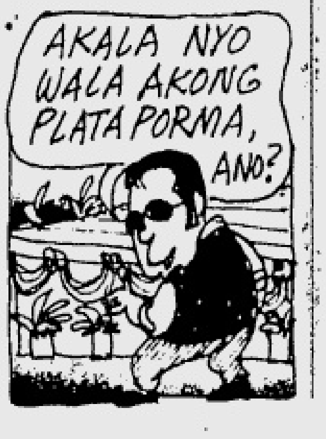
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/02/28/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Explain, US judge orders PNB

By Dona Pazzibugan

A UNITED States judge has threatened to cite the Philippine National Bank in contempt for transferring the $684 million ill-gotten Marcos funds to the government.

But the Presidential Commission on Good Government yesterday simply shrugged off the order of Judge Manuel Real, the Hawaii judge who awarded some 10,000 Marcos rights abuse claimants $2 billion in damages against the Marcos estate.

To enforce the award, Real had imposed a "global injunction" against the transfer of any Marcos assets.

In an order dated Feb. 25, Real ordered PNB officials to appear before the court to "show cause" why the bank should not be held in contempt.

Real said PNB appeared to have violated his Sept. 2, 2003 "global injunction" against the transfer of any Marcos funds.

PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac, however, dismissed Real's threat. "Let him do his thing and let us do our thing," she said.

Former PCGG Chair Jovito Salonga also said Real's threat was "meaningless."

The PNB on Feb. 2 transferred to the National Treasury the ownership of the $684 million that Marcos had allegedly secretly stashed in the Swiss banks.

Months earlier the Supreme Court ruled that the Swiss deposits were illegally acquired and forfeited in favor of the government.

But a German bank in Singapore refused to turn over to the PNB $22 million of the funds because of Real's "global injunction."

In his Feb. 25 order, a copy of which was faxed to the Inquirer last night, Real required the PNB to explain whether it transferred assets claimed by the Marcoses to the Philippine government.

Real also ordered the PNB to give him "the dates, amounts and sources of all such assets" transferred to the Republic, as well as a "detailed inventory of all other assets" claimed by the Marcoses that are currently in PNB's custody.

Real issued the order after US lawyers Robert Swift and Sherry Broder asked his court to cite the PNB for contempt. Broder is a Marcos lawyer.

Swift represented the Marcos human rights victims in their class suit before the Hawaii court.

In their joint motion, Swift and Broder said the global injunction against the transfer of any Marcos funds is in effect until the human rights victims get their $2 billion damages award.

The PCGG earlier this month asked the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to set aside Real's global injunction order.

The PCGG said Real cannot enforce such an injunction on sovereign nations.

Next gov't-NDF talks in Beijing; 14 prisoners to be released

By Christian V. Esguerra

AFTER what was judged to be "successful" initial talks in Oslo, the government and the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, have tentatively set a second round of formal negotiations for the end of March in Beijing.

The NDF panel chaired by Luis Jalandoni wants the negotiation to start on March 29 in the Chinese capital. Chief government negotiator Silvestre Bello III said his panel has no problem with that.

"Time and venue are a non-issue. Both panels are determined to pursue the peace talks," said Bello.

But the government warned the communists that it would not formally ask the United States to remove them from its terrorist blacklist.

Waiting for Norway

Bello and NDF panel legal consultant Romeo Capulong said both parties were just waiting for the Norwegian government, the third-party facilitator, to make arrangements with the Chinese government.

But they are also open to the idea of resuming the talks in Oslo where the government and the NDF signed a joint statement on Feb. 14 following four days of negotiations.

As a sign of goodwill, for the forthcoming peace talks, Bello said the government would release in March at least 14 political prisoners. The NDF is lobbying for the release of at least 22 inmates.

"It's just a matter of comparing notes and reconciling our figures. We're not expecting any problem with that," said Bello.

Bello said three women and two men would be freed before the second round of talks.

It was not clear if the prisoners set for release included Donato Continente and Juanito Itaas who were convicted for the killing of American soldier James Rowe in the late 1980s.

Capulong said Continente and Itaas had been included in previous lists only to be dropped later, reportedly because of objections from the United States.

Bello said the government could not guarantee the Communist Party, and its armed wing, the New People's Army, would be taken off the US state department's 2002 list of "foreign terrorist organizations."

The Norway talks nearly collapsed after the rebels insisted on having the terrorist tag removed, but both sides eventually agreed on a statement in which the government agreed to "call" on the US to do so.

"Clearly the wording (in the agreement) is that we would only urge the US government including the other members of the European Union to help or support the peace process by way of resolving the issue of terrorist listing," Bello said.

No direct commitment

"There is no direct commitment to ask any of these states to delist them, but merely to urge them to help the peace process. Whether they would delist it as a way of help, that is left to the sound discretion of the foreign governments," he said.

The government panel appears to have abandoned the initial target of signing a final peace agreement to end the 35-year communist insurgency before the May 10 elections.

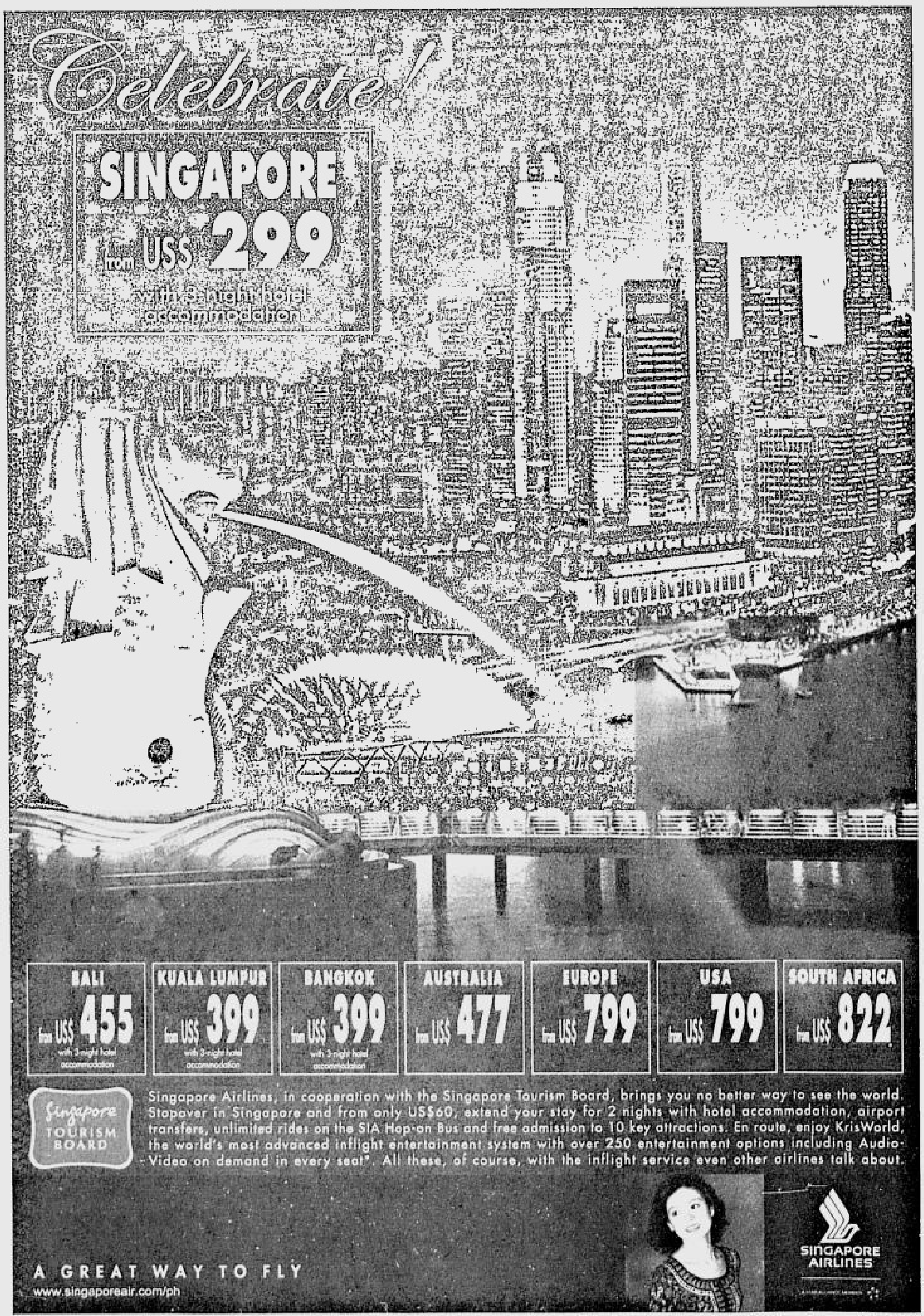
Capulong said the target was meant to boost President Macapagal-Arroyo's chances in the contest.

Bello and Capulong admitted that a change in administration would affect the talks but not to the extent of scuttling them altogether.

A defeat for the President would likely see a new president appointing new people into the government panel.

Capulong said this would not be a problem as agreements signed with the government panel under previous administrations have remained binding.

They include the 1992 Hague Joint Declaration and the 1998 Comprehensive Agreement on Respect of Human Rights and International Law. *With AFP*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Military confirms plot to grab power

By Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY yesterday confirmed that certain groups plan to stage another attempt to grab power in the event opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. is disqualified and are now recruiting active military personnel to join the destabilization move.

But a retired military official supporting the candidacy of the movie actor dismissed the alleged plot as part of a government plan to create a "destabilization" scenario to justify the declaration of a state of emergency and the suspension of the elections.

In Pagadian City, President Macapagal-Arroyo said there was no way for any military uprising to succeed.

"We have crushed a number of attempts to grab power but we're confident there is no way any destabilization plot could ever get off the ground," the President said.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero identified one of the groups reportedly recruiting military personnel as members of the Magdalo, a group of disgruntled junior officers who led the Oakwood mutiny in July last year.

Lucero explained that the Magdalo leaders hope the cases filed against them would be dismissed once there is a change in government, either through the elections in May or otherwise.

"We are looking at some members of the Magdalo who are hopeful that they will be exonerated from the cases filed against them if ever their political bet will win this election. We have some raw reports on this," Lucero told reporters yesterday.

He explained that the Magdalo leaders still have contacts outside their detention cells inside Camp Aguinaldo.

"Some of the members of the Magdalo still have contacts with the outside. They still have cellphones and they are recruiting soldiers to join their cause if ever there will be a disqualification (of Poe) and if there will be reported fraud and cheating in this coming elections."

Lucero also said that "shadowy groups" have established links with the Magdalo and are planning destabilization moves through informal meetings. "We know for a fact that there are different groups who share a common enemy, the government. So it is not far-fetched that they have forged an alliance to destabilize the present government."

He added that retired generals and officers are also involved in the recruitment of AFP personnel.

Lucero also identified the Kawal Pilipino as among those recruiting soldiers in active service. Kawal Pilipino, a group of young military officers, exposed last month an alleged government plot to use the military to destroy the chances of Ms Macapagal's rivals of winning the elections.

He declined to name any of the other groups and personalities involved.

But retired Col. Reynaldo Cabauatan of the Association of Retired Military Police Officers and Enlisted men (ARMPOE), said the military and the government are conditioning the minds of the public that destabilization moves are afoot to set the stage for the possible declaration of a state of emergency and the suspension of the May elections.

"They are shaping the minds of the people to justify their intentions of deferring the elections perhaps by way of declaring a state of emergency. They are creating the speculations themselves," Cabauatan told reporters.

He added that the elections could be derailed since Ms Macapagal, who is lagging in the surveys, would want to perpetuate herself in power.

Cabauatan admitted that his group has established contact with "sympathizers and supporters" of the Magdalo soldiers.

"It's because of the issues, not because of the actions they have taken. The issues are still really very relevant up to the present like corruption and complacency in the bureaucracy. So there seems to be a discontentment among the people. There was a violation of the contract between the people and the government. The idea of real service to country is lost."

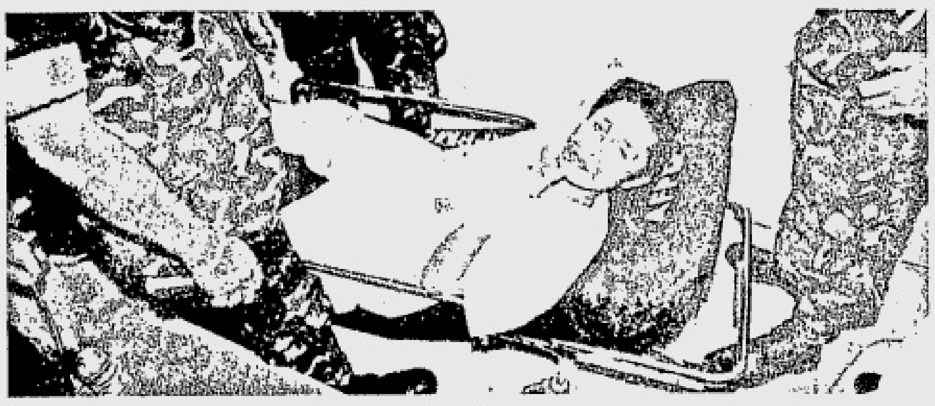
Cabauatan, a former member of the Reform the AFP Movement, has joined every coup launched since 1987 except the bloodiest military uprising in 1989 when he was already behind bars.

The other day, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said antigovernment forces are recruiting troops in an effort to incite another uprising similar if not worse than the July 27 Oakwood mutiny in case Poe is disqualified by the Supreme Court from the presidential race.

The Magdalo leaders are now detained at the compound of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines inside Camp Aguinaldo. They are facing coup d'etat charges before Makati courts.

Rebellion raps to be filed vs Robot

By Philip C. Tubeza



GALIB Andang, alias Commander Robot, is carried to his arraignment at the regional trial court in Camp Bagong Diwa by his military escorts. JOAN BONDOC

THE GOVERNMENT will file rebellion charges against Abu Sayyaf leader Ghalib Andang, alias Commander Robot, on March 12 for his alleged participation in the November 2001 rebellion staged by former Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Gov. Nur Misuari.

Acting Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez said that Andang would be arraigned in a special courtroom in Fort Sto. Domingo, a police camp in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, where Misuari is currently detained.

This developed as the Department of Justice yesterday denied reports that the government was dropping charges against Misuari in exchange for his support for the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the May elections.

State Prosecutor Peter Ong said Andang participated in the "planning and execution" of Misuari's rebellion.

Andang already faces kidnapping charges for his role in the Abu Sayyaf raid on the Sipadan resort in Sabah, Malaysia in 2000 where 21 foreigners, mostly European tourists, were abducted. Andang was also charged with robbery in Jolo, Sulu.

Ong said that Andang's arraignment would coincide with the presentation of the first government witness, a certain Col. Abdul Kiram Yusop, against Misuari.

Gutierrez said the charges against Misuari would not be dropped, adding that government prosecutors base their decisions on the evidence in the case.

Ong also said the case against Misuari would not be reinvestigated since his defense lawyers have not formally asked the San Pedro, Laguna Regional Trial Court to order another preliminary investigation.

"None among the defense counsels have filed any motion of leave of court to conduct such a reinvestigation. There is no motion for leave, therefore, they could not proceed with the reinvestigation," Ong said.

Defense lawyers had sought a reinvestigation after former Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong ordered another inquiry into the case in December 2003 since Misuari was allegedly "deprived of the full measure" of his right to due process.

But in a written comment before the court, Ong said a reinvestigation would be an "impropriety" since the accused in the case "have been arraigned."

Ong noted that prosecutors had already conducted two preliminary investigations on the case.

Misuari and six others were charged with rebellion before Judge Norberto Y. Geraldez of the Calamba, Laguna Regional Trial Court Branch 36 after about 600 of Misuari's supporters attacked military outposts and a police station in Jolo, Sulu, on Nov. 19, 2001 in a bid to stop the ARMM elections.

The November 2001 uprising, which lasted for days, left over 100 people dead. Misuari fled to Malaysia where local authorities arrested him on Nov. 24, 2001 as he arrived in Sabah by boat. He was detained for breaking Malaysian immigration laws before being deported to Manila in January 2002.

He was initially charged before the Jolo, Sulu Regional Trial Court on Jan. 3, 2002, but the trial was transferred to Calamba on orders of then Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

GMA on Nazario: She will continue to stay at Sandigan

By Gil C. Cabacungan

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo finally spoke up on the fate of Sandiganbayan Presiding Judge Minito Chico Nazario whose appointment as the new Associate Justice of the Supreme Court has been in limbo over the past few weeks.

But instead of clarifying whether Nazario was in or out of the high court, the President's statement in a press conference at Pagadian City merely clouded an issue that has befuddled legal circles.

"There is a clamor for her (Nazario) to pay some of the more important issues regarding the Estrada case which she is handling. So I am giving her more time with regard to that," the President said when asked to comment on rumors that she has recalled the appointment of Nazario. She did not elaborate.

Her spokesperson, Secretary Ignacio Bunye, refused to say if the President has withdrawn or merely deferred Nazario's appointment pending the resolution of the Estrada case in her court.

"Our president has made a statement and I don't wish to add further to that. We do not wish to preempt the President on this matter; she is entitled to her prerogative. When she makes a decision, we will make a formal announcement," Bunye said.

Bunye admitted that his announcement of Nazario's appointment on Feb. 11 was not authorized by the President although she did sign the appointment papers the day before. Bunye revealed that since the release of Nazario's announcement, "her papers were retrieved."

Nazario is supposed to take the place of Associate Justice Josue Bellosillo who retired on Nov. 13.

Told about the President's statement relative to her appointment to the Supreme Court, Nazario said she will "abide by whatever schedule the President may set for my oath taking."

Nazario's short statement was relayed to the media by Sandigan chief Sheriff Ed Urieta who called up the Sandiganbayan reporters early yesterday evening. *With Armand Nocum*

Transport groups set for nationwide strike

GMA appeals for prudence

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Edson Tandoc Jr., Margaux Ortiz and Clarissa S. Batino

TRANSPORTATION in the metropolis and key cities all over the country is expected to be paralyzed on Monday as several public groups stage a nationwide strike, in what could be the first wave of a series of strikes, to push their demand for a P1 provisional fare hike and a rollback in oil prices.

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo appealed to public transport leaders to avert a massive strike next week which could paralyze transportation in Central Luzon, the Bicol Region, Metro Manila and other key cities around the country.

"We call on the transport leaders to deal with this problem as prudently and as reasonably as possible," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

"While we understand the sentiments of public utility vehicles operators and drivers in the midst of oil price hikes, we ask them to take into consideration the negative effects on the average Filipino because fare hikes would certainly cause a domino-effect on the prices of our basic commodities," the President said.

The Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide and the newly formed Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator ng Pilipinas yesterday announced separate plans to stage nationwide strikes on March 1, ahead of the March 8 strike earlier announced by other major transport groups.

Jeepney operators and drivers have asked the Land Transportation and Regulatory Board for an increase of P2 for the first 5 kilometers. At the same time, they sought a provisional fare hike of P1 for the first 5 kilometers. Bus groups had petitioned for a similar increase.

The minimum fare on ordinary metro buses and jeepneys is currently at P4 while air-conditioned buses charge P9.

The last time the LTFRB approved a fare hike was in year 2000 when fares went up by 50 centavos for the first 5 km.

They are also demanding the resignation of LTFRB chair Ma. Elena Bautista.

Bautista yesterday appealed to the jeepney groups to respect the LTFRB's process in deciding whether or not a fare hike petition has merits.

"We are appealing to the transport groups not to push through with the strike for the sake of the public. People have to go to work and students have to attend their classes. There is a due process and this should be respected," said Bautista.

The LTFRB is scheduled to decide on the groups' petition for provisional fare increase next week.

Piston national president Mario Garvida said unless the government compels oil companies to rollback the price of diesel to P12.60 per liter, the strike would push through.

Garvida told reporters yesterday that their affiliate local organizations in various provinces had agreed to join the strike simultaneously with Piston members in Metro Manila. Piston has 200,000 members nationwide, 50,000 of whom are in Metro Manila, Garvida said. Aside from jeepney drivers, Piston also has tricycle drivers as members.

Garvida added that some bus organizations would also join the strike on Monday.

Garvida said the Bayan Muna coalition would join the strike. These include the Kilusang Mayo Uno, government employees organization Courage, and several groups of farmers, urban poor and students.

STOP members will also stage simultaneous strikes on Monday, coalition member Tom Talavera of the Bukluran ng mga Progresibong Tsuper at Operator (Central Luzon) said.

STOP targets to paralyze transportation in at least 116 cities and municipalities in Laguna, Batangas, Cavite, Quezon, Tarlac, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Zambales, Cordillera Region, areas in Mindanao, the whole of Cebu and Baguio City.

Garvida said that jeepney drivers and operators had not increased fares in the last two years while the price of diesel had gone up from P12.62 in 2002 to P18 in 2004.

PCDO-ACTO president Efren de Luna said Monday's strike would be part of a series of strikes by other transport groups which would culminate in a nationwide strike on March 8.

De Luna said the March 8 strike could last from one day to a week, depending on how the government would act on their demands.

Benjamin Rubio, president of the Laguna Transport Service Federation, yesterday appealed to commuters to stay home on Monday.

Rubio said rising prices of oil and spare parts left them with no choice but to instigate the strike. "We are hopeful that the government will finally give in to our demands because this strike will affect everyone as well," he said.

But not all jeepney drivers are committed to join the strike.

Pasang-Masda president Obet Martin, who claims to have 30,000 members, said they would wait for the LTFRB decision before deciding whether to join the strike or not.

The Federation of Drivers and Jeepney Operators with more than 250,000 members nationwide also said it would wait for LTFRB's decision next week.

Meanwhile, bus operators led by Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association president Claire de la Fuente declared their support for the jeepney drivers' bid for a fare hike.

But De la Fuente said they are still studying whether or not to join Monday's strike.

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SM MAKATI

7 Waray-Waray kidnap group members arrested

By Alcuin Papa and Christian Esguerra

GOVERNMENT operatives arrested yesterday seven suspected members of the notorious Waray-Waray kidnap-for-ransom gang in Binangonan, Rizal, after a brief shootout.

Initial reports from the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktf) said elements from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (Pacer) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) swooped down on the suspected hideout of the suspects in Tayuman Subdivision in San Carlos village in Binangonan, Rizal.

Just as the Naktf forces converged on the suspected hideout, the suspects tried to shoot it out with authorities. The suspects were eventually cornered after a brief firefight. Four were identified as Mario Artoza, Melvin Canas, Reyno dela Cruz and Bobby Artoza, who is said to be a former soldier.

No casualties were reported on both sides, Naktf officials said.

A tip from a resident led to the arrest of the suspects.

The Waray-Waray kidnap group is behind several high-profile kidnapping cases in Metro Manila, including the cases of Domingo Chu in Pasay City last month and Gelina Dy in Paco, Manila last year. The two were rescued by authorities.

Most of the Waray-Waray gang members are believed to be hiding in remote areas in Leyte.

The government has launched a campaign against kidnappers following the controversial kidnapping and killing of Coca-Cola executive Betti Chua Sy in November last year.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, February 28, 2004
Saturday after Ash Wednesday

1st Reading: Is 58:9-14
Gospel: Lk 5:27-32

After this Jesus went out, and as he noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax-office, he said to him, "Follow me." So Levi, leaving everything, got up and followed Jesus.

Levi gave a great feast for Jesus, and many tax collectors came to his house and took their place at table with the other people. Then the Pharisees and their fellow teachers complained to Jesus' disciples, "How is it that you eat and drink with tax collectors and other sinners?" But Jesus spoke up, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I have come to call to repentance; I call sinners, not the righteous."

Commentary

Some years ago a rather unpopular member of a royal family said she wanted to wash her hands every time she shook hands with the common people. It's sometimes hard (and not only for royalty) to come right down to the ground.

It would be strange if the Word became flesh, but stopped short of taking the final step: mingling with the common people, all of us, "the great unwashed." Jesus mixed with "the worst elements" in society. (What a strange phrase! Have you ever been called an "element"?). There was not just one tax collector but "many."

It was inevitable that the "unco guid" would arrive too. These Pharisees needed those tax collectors. The name 'Pharisee' means 'Separated': their special righteousness separated them from the common people. Naturally they needed those others to be different: otherwise they themselves could not be 'Separated'. It was essential for the Pharisees that there should be lots of tax collectors and sinners; it is essential for some "good" (or "guid") people that there should be great numbers of 'bad' people. But how disconcerting it always is to find Jesus among the bad!

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Bro. Mike eyes RPN-9

El Shaddai offers 5-year deal worth P500M

By Dona Pazzibugan

VELARDE

EL SHADDAI leader Mike Velarde has offered to manage the sequestered TV station RPN-9 where the Catholic charismatic group is a regular block timer.

An official of the Presidential Commission on Good Government said on Wednesday that the evangelist was among those who offered a management contract.

But PCGG Commissioner Vyva Aguirre said it was an informal offer.

RPN-9 insiders said that Velarde offered a five-year management contract worth P500 million.

Aguirre and other PCGG officials, however, would not disclose details, saying all they have so far are informal offers. "They haven't written anything down. It's all verbal," she said.

A few years ago Velarde tried to acquire Channel 11, but lost to Jesus Is Lord movement leader Bro. Eddie Villanueva, who is now running for president in the May elections.

PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac confirmed that "a few have expressed interest" in the management of RPN-9 which is encountering financial difficulties.

"People who want to take advantage of the situation are beginning to move and trying to get the company for a song. We will not allow that to happen," she said.

She said some of the offers were "outright bad." She did not elaborate.

Yorac said they are willing to consider any offer as long as they are written.

All offers would also have to go through RPN-9 management, she added.

"They haven't come to us officially yet. We will tackle it when it comes to us officially," said Aguirre.

Series of quakes jolts Mindanao

A SERIES of moderate earthquakes struck a mountainous region in the southern Philippines, sending people out of their homes but causing no injuries or damage, officials said yesterday.

The strongest was a 5-magnitude quake early Friday near Pagadian City, said Ric Mangao of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

The temblors, which started late Thursday, were set off by movement in a fault line on the western side of southern Mindanao, he said. Some of the quakes were too weak to be felt, he said.

"Everybody was telling everybody to calm down, don't panic," said Vilmar Marquez, 25, who was roused from sleep and rushed to the street from a third-floor hotel room with his brother and cousin in Dipolog City.

The same fault moved in 1994, causing a 5.7-magnitude earthquake that damaged buildings but caused no injuries, Mangao said.

The Philippines is along the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire," where earthquakes and volcanic activity are common. *AP*

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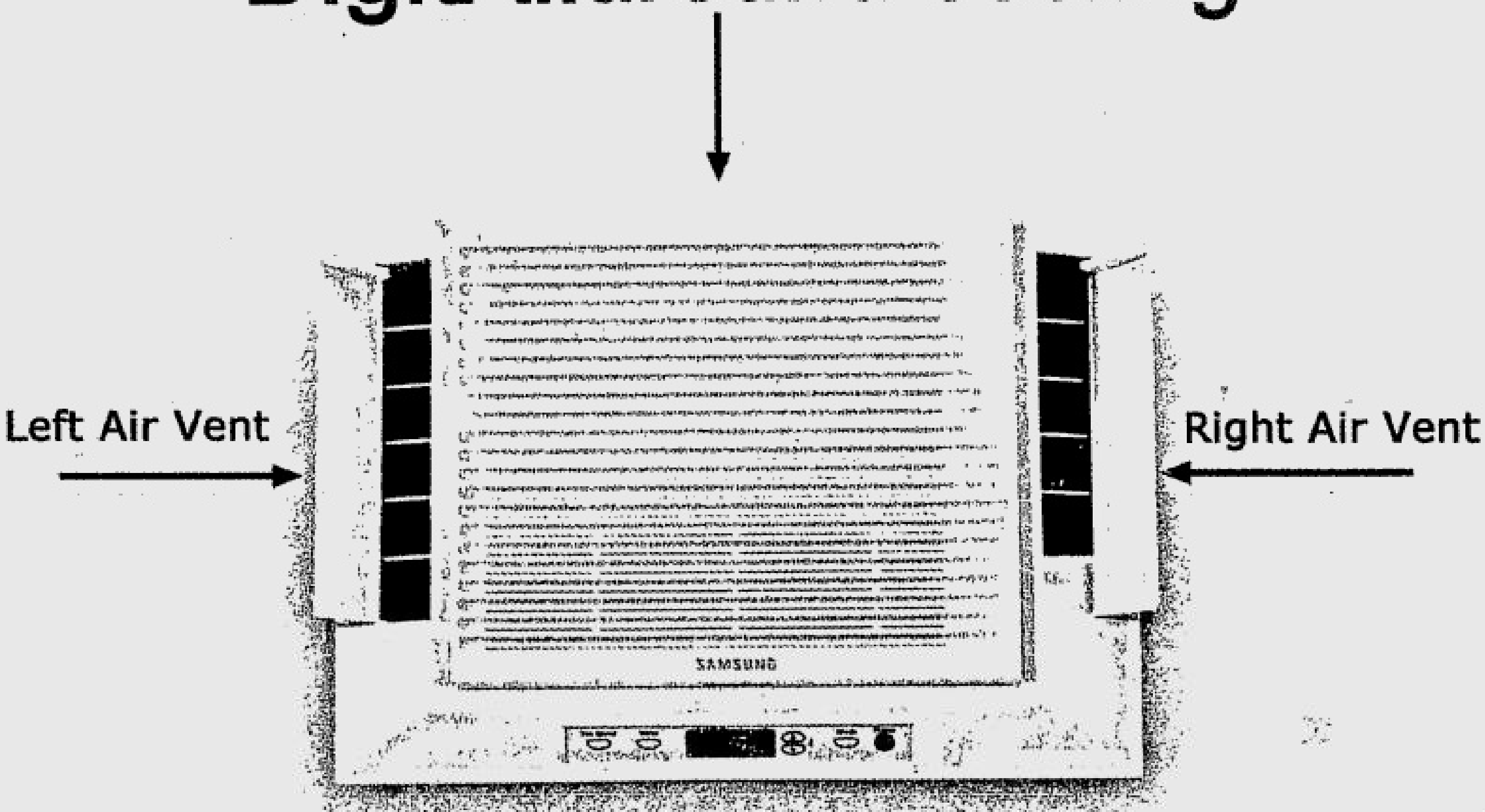

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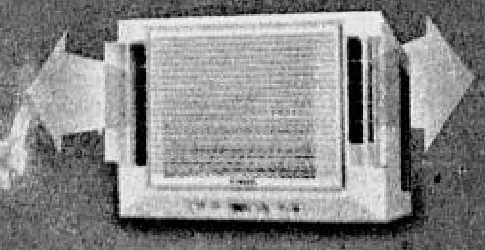

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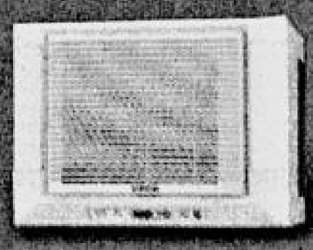

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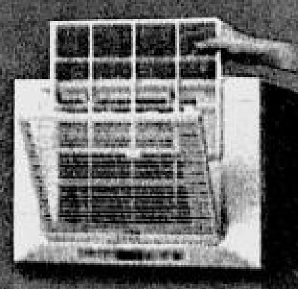

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Misuari expects to be free by March

By Edwin O. Fernandez
and Rosa-May V. de Guzman
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Jailed Moro rebel leader Nur Misuari, who is supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo's candidacy, yesterday said in a radio interview that he expected to be out of jail by March.

However, the former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) denied opposition charges that his endorsement of the President was in exchange for his freedom.

Misuari, who is detained in Fort Sto. Domingo, Sta. Rosa, Laguna, said all he asked for was a fair and speedy trial.

Misuari was jailed for the bloody uprising of his followers in Zamboanga City and Jolo about two years ago.

He revealed that a few days ago, Speaker Jose de Venecia and National Security Adviser Norbert Gonzales visited him in Fort Sto. Domingo and sought his comment on the coming national and local elections.

During the meeting, Misuari said he volunteered to endorse Ms Macapagal as his personal candidate and promised to convince other Muslim leaders to support her in the May presidential elections.

"In exchange, I asked the government, through De Venecia and Gonzales, for a fair and speedy trial," he told Radio dxMS here.

Misuari's endorsement of his jailer had surprised Muslim leaders.

Misuari said that when he gets out of jail, he would immediately meet with Muslim leaders to convince them to support the President because she "has a true heart" for Mindanao and its people.

Misuari said he would also pursue the reunification of the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

He said the reunification of the two fronts was the dream of Hashim Salamat, who headed the MILF until his death last year.

Roco, Bro. Eddie at Ateneo forum

THE ATENEO Alumni Association is sponsoring a series of Presidentiable's Forum entitled, "Blue-print 2004-2010" at the Ateneo Professional Schools auditorium in Rockwell, Makati City starting Monday at 7 p.m.

The first speaker will be presidential candidate and former Sen. Raul Roco of Alyansa ng Pag-asa on March 1, 2004. Bro. Eddie Villanueva of Bangon Filipinas will be featured on March 2, 2004.

This project is in partnership with the student councils of the Graduate School of Business, Ateneo Law School and the Sanggunian ng Mag-aaral ng Ateneo of the Loyola Schools, faculty and staff, parents' associations of the Grade School, High School and the Loyola Schools and alumni.

The public is invited to watch the forum. For details, call Chinky at the Ateneo Alumni Office at tel. 426-6001 local 4093.

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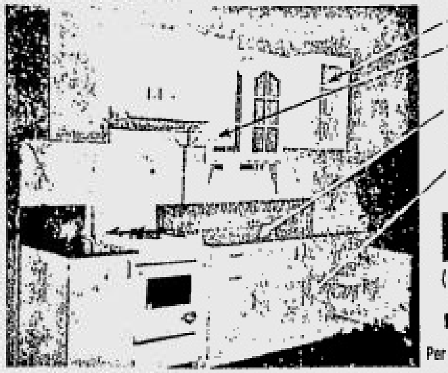
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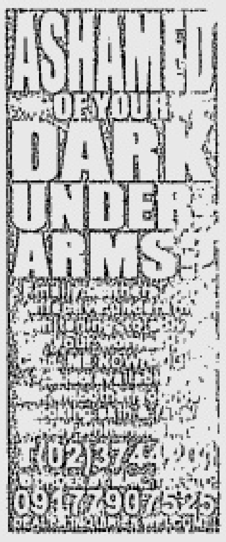
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CHEd moves to stop runaway tuition increases

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

NOW they're talking.

After 22 years, the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) took a daring step to stop runaway fee increases in colleges.

In its boldest move yet, the government regulatory body said yesterday it would put a cap to allowable increases in tuition and other fees.

Officials want to peg increases according to the inflation rate. They also want school owners to get the students' approval beforehand.

DIZON: The school owners will really hate us for this.

Very bold step

"The school owners will really hate us for this," said CHEd Chair Rolando Dizon. Added CHEd executive director Roger Perez: "This is a very bold step toward rationalizing higher education especially for private schools."

Dizon said they would come out with the new guidelines by mid-March in time for the June school opening. "These are radical departures and I know they would be resisted vehemently. But we think this is fair," he added.

Since 1982, colleges and universities have been imposing fees unilaterally. In 1998, CHEd required schools to "consult" with students and parents before raising their tuition. But schools continued to increase their miscellaneous fees, without any monitoring.

The deregulation act of 1982 (Batas Pambansa 232) provides that fee increases are still subject to (CHEd's) rules and regulations," said Dizon. "I knew this but I was not in CHEd then," he admitted. Dizon was president of De La Salle University before he took over the commission in 2001.

Inflation rate

Under the proposed rules, fee increases would be based on the previous year's inflation rate.

"But we also want to be flexible, so we're willing to consider allowing up to 10 percent (increase), but they have to justify it," Dizon said. Schools that raise fees "beyond the inflation rate should get the approval of students and parents. Consultations are not enough," he said.

For incoming freshmen, the CHEd chair is willing to allow schools to impose a higher increase, "maybe a cap of 15 percent," as long as it is justified. Previously, CHEd received notices of tuition increases, but now wants to approve these first.

"We're not saying they should stop raising fees," Dizon stressed. "But we feel the existing guidelines are not tough enough."

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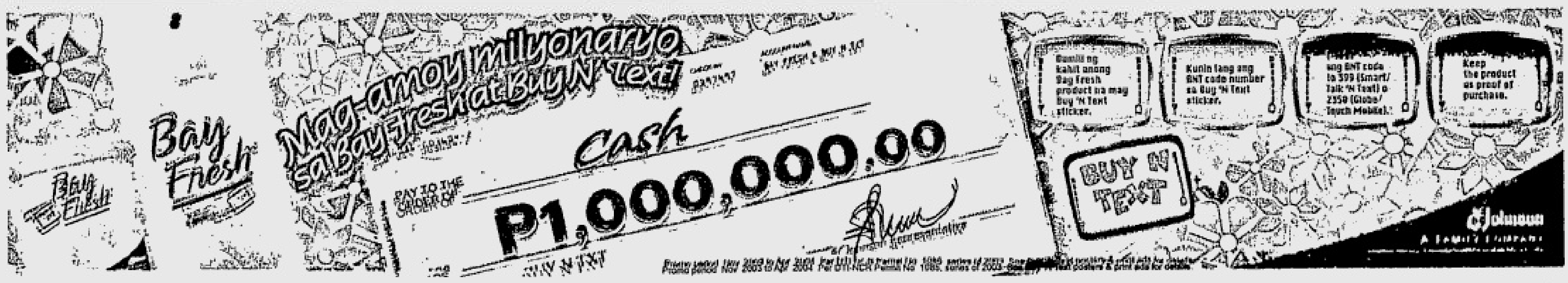

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2 more party mates abandon Isang Bansa's Eddie Gil

By Martin P. Marfil

THREE out, who's next?

After unpleasant episodes involving unpaid bills, things have not been for the better for presidential aspirant Eddie Gil. Now, three senatorial candidates of Gil's Partido Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa have abandoned him, with one of them branding Gil's campaign "a hoax."

Former Sen. Eddie Ilarde, actress Pilar Pilapil and Jose Floro Crisologo have already informed the Commission on Elections that they are leaving Gil's party. Pilapil and Crisologo showed up yesterday at the election agency office to formalize their withdrawal from the party, with Ilarde making the first move the other day.

Pilapil will run as an independent while Ilarde has joined the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan.

Crisologo, on the other hand, said he has junked his senatorial ambition.

"He (Gil) claims to be an international high-yield banker, he claims to be part of the top 25," Crisologo said. "Although we have not really checked his claim, the way things have been going, it's proving to be that way, to be a hoax," he stressed, adding that Gil has "many" unpaid bills.

"That's why we are leaving, because that's not part of our agreement, these unpaid bills and bouncing checks. It was an honest-to-goodness agreement for an honest-to-goodness campaign but it turned out to be a hoax. And we don't want to be part of a hoax," he said.

Gil is the sixth presidential candidate in the 2004 elections whose party was accredited by the Comelec because it supposedly had the capacity to wage a national campaign. His candidacy, however, is being questioned by Bangon Pilipinas bet Bro. Eddie Villanueva who wants the Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa bigwig out of the race, saying that Gil is a "nuisance" candidate.

In his campaign sorties and earlier interviews, Gil claimed to be a rich man who promised to pay off the national debt once he wins. But what made him front page material was when news broke out that he failed to pay his hotel and transportation bills during a Mindanao sortie recently.

"I have my doubts that this is a party that can wage a nationwide campaign and recent events tend to show that this is going to bring more embarrassment to our fellow candidates," Ilarde said earlier.

The former broadcaster also revealed that the party has not helped him and that it does not have campaign resources. Ilarde pointed out that Gil does not even have a campaign manager, an itinerary of provincial sorties and, if these are scheduled, candidates are not told what to expect.

Like the others, Ilarde had filed his candidacy as an independent but was approached by Gil's group to run under his party. He accepted the invitation as he was not able to join the other mainstream parties since he could not make any contributions to the party coffers, he said.

Pilapil, on the other hand, said she was leaving because of differences in principles.

"That goes without saying. Isn't it obvious?" Pilapil said when asked to comment on Crisologo's description of Gil's party as a "hoax.

"When I sensed that they did not comply with their promises to (their senatorial bets), I kept my distance," she said, adding that as a presidential aspirant, Gil had to comply with an earlier agreement which she did not specify.

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Rebels seize Haiti's 3rd largest city

PORT-AU-PRINCE—Haitian rebels seized the country's third largest city and the United States and Canada signaled an end to support for President Jean Bertrand Aristide, but the embattled leader insisted he still would not stand down.

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SUPPORTERS of Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide gather outside Haiti's National Palace, Feb. 26, after rumors of Aristide's resignation spread throughout Port-au-Prince. The crowd demanded "five more years" by holding up their hands as a show of support for Aristide. AP

"I hope President Aristide will examine his position carefully and that judgments will be made as to what is best for the people of Haiti in this most difficult time," said US Secretary of State Colin Powell in Washington.

"He is the democratically elected president, but he has had difficulties in his presidency, and I think, as a number of people have commented, whether or not he is able to effectively continue as president is something that he will have to examine," Powell added.

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"So it is perhaps best for Mr Aristide to look at his responsibilities toward his people and say: 'Look it would be better that I, voluntarily, I leave'," said Graham.

"If he said that, I have said that we, Canada, we would be ready to act with other countries to assure security and order in Haiti," he added.

Despite the pressure mounting around him, Aristide reaffirmed that he was determined to finish his term.

"I will leave the palace on Feb. 7, 2006, which is good for our democracy," he said.

"We have had 32 coups d'etat and that is enough," Aristide told CNN television.

Aristide renewed calls for international support against the insurrection, and warned there could be thousands of dead and a mass exodus unless a peaceful resolution is urgently found.

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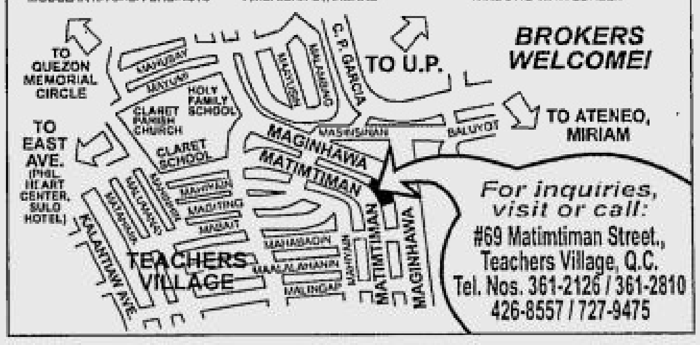
US President George W. Bush has said any intercepted refugees would be returned by the United States to Haitian soil, but Human Rights Watch on Thursday urged the administration not to turn back refugees. *AFP*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US moves closer to normalizing ties with Libya

WASHINGTON—The United States took giant steps closer to normalizing relations with Libya on Thursday by ending a two-decade travel ban, easing some economic sanctions and pushing for deeper diplomatic ties.

The move rewarded Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi for his surprise pledge in December 2003, after nine months of secret talks with the United States and Britain, to quit his quest for weapons of mass destruction.

"American efforts with Libya since Dec. 19 have made our country safer and the world more peaceful," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said in a statement detailing the overtures.

In one highly symbolic step, Washington rescinded a travel ban enforced since relations with Tripoli broke off in 1981, allowing US citizens to use their passports to travel to or through Libya and spend money there.

US President George W. Bush also authorized US firms with pre-sanction holdings in Libya to resume business there, and invited Tripoli to lay the groundwork for eventually normalizing relations by establishing a diplomatic interests section—but not an embassy—in Washington.

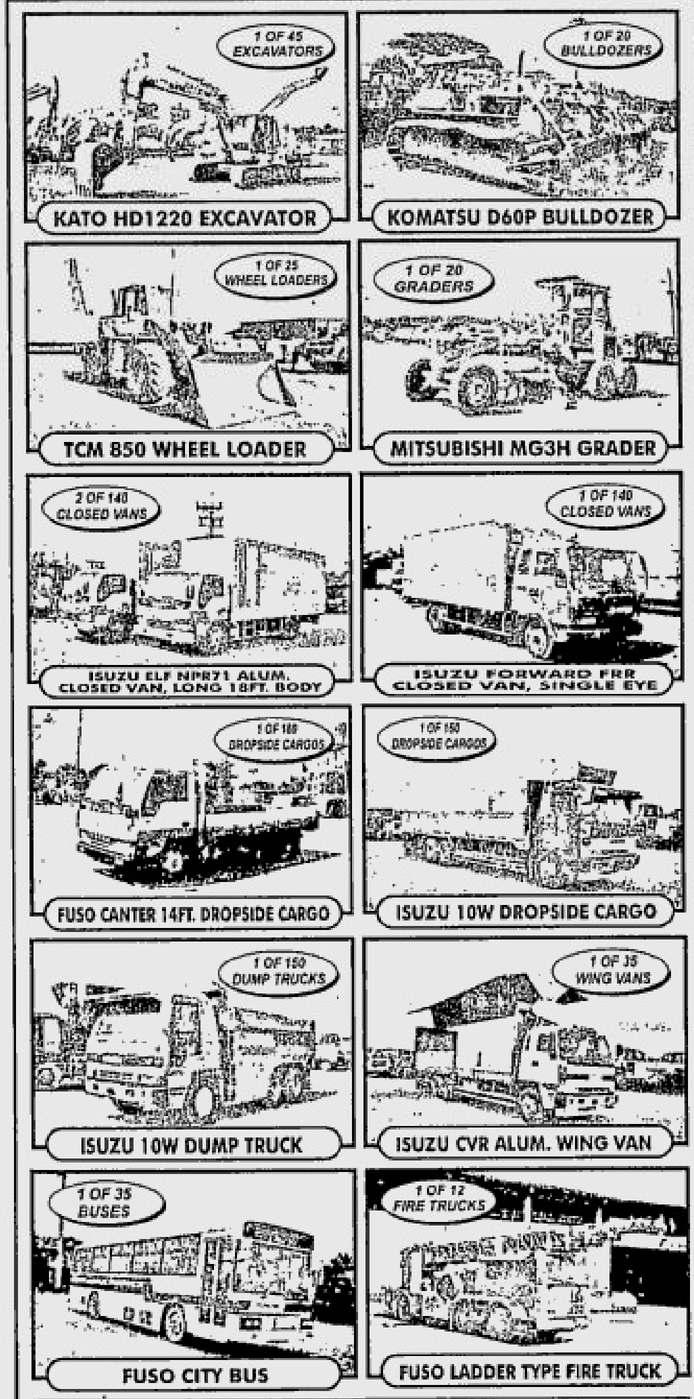
Doing so will help "to facilitate our cooperation in the elimination of WMD and to lay the foundation for more extensive diplomatic relations in the future," said McClellan.

The United States, in turn, will beef up its staff levels at its interests section in Tripoli, and explore cooperation on humanitarian issues, starting with a US medical mission that heads to Libya Feb. 28.

"There's a new atmosphere. We're working on a new partnership with the United States, France and Europe," Libyan Foreign Minister Abdelrahman Shalgham said in the Libyan Mediterranean coastal city Sirte.

The shift came after Libya formally recanted a recent statement by its prime minister rejecting responsibility for the 1988 bombing of a PanAm airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people, including 181 Americans.

Libya had written to the UN Security Council in August 2003, accepting responsibility for Libyan officials involved in the bombing. The council lifted international sanctions against Libya one month later. *AFP*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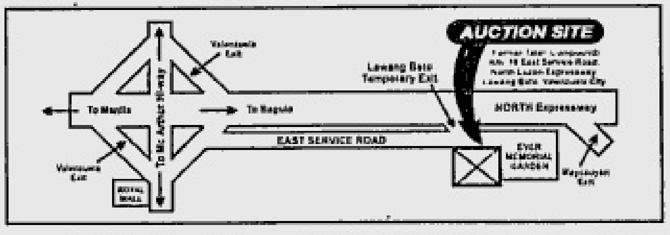
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Bird flu outbreaks hit Japan

TOKYO—Japan was hit by another suspected case of bird flu, the second possible outbreak this week, after 10,000 chickens were found dead in the southwest, an official said Friday.

Three of the dead birds tested positive for avian flu at a public health center near the affected poultry farm in Tanba town, Kyoto prefecture, 400 km southwest of Tokyo, said a spokesperson for the Kyoto government.

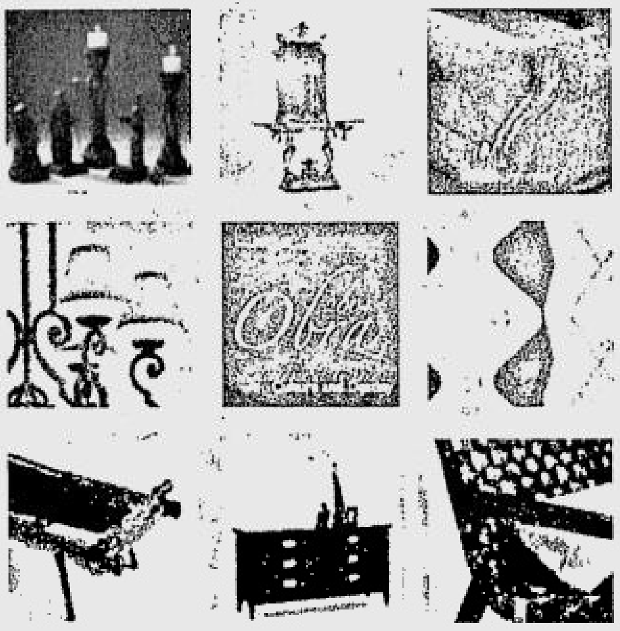
"We also tested nine live birds from the farm, and two of them tested positive for bird flu," the spokesperson said.

Kyoto officials are now conducting detailed tests to confirm and identify the virus, he said.

If the tests, which will take three to four days, prove positive, the case would be referred to the National Institute of Animal Health for final confirmation, the official said.

Similar testing is taking place in Nagano prefecture in central Japan, where a dead chicken tested both positive and negative for the disease at two different public health centers using preliminary testing kits.

Anti-body testing for the Nagano bird will be available later Friday. Testing to isolate the possible virus will take a few more days, a farm official in Nagano said. *AFP*



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The WORLD

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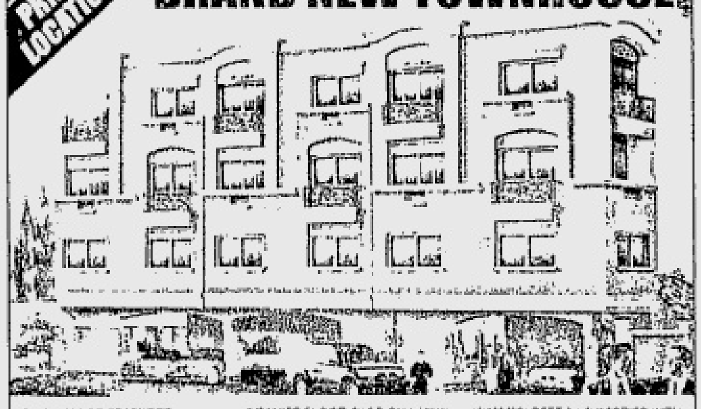

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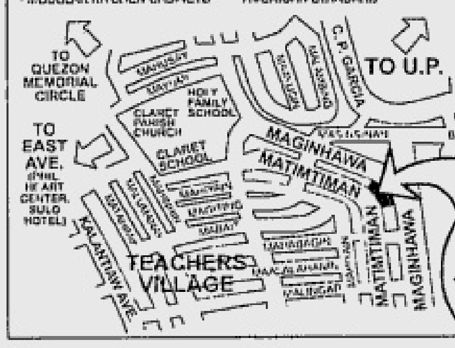

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US moves closer to normalizing ties with Libya

WASHINGTON—The United States took giant steps closer to normalizing relations with Libya on Thursday by ending a two-decade travel ban, easing some economic sanctions and pushing for deeper diplomatic ties.

The move rewarded Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi for his surprise pledge in December 2003, after nine months of secret talks with the United States and Britain, to quit his quest for weapons of mass destruction.

"American efforts with Libya since Dec. 19 have made our country safer and the world more peaceful," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said in a statement detailing the overtures.

In one highly symbolic step, Washington rescinded a travel ban enforced since relations with Tripoli broke off in 1981, allowing US citizens to use their passports to travel to or through Libya and spend money there.

US President George W. Bush also authorized US firms with pre-sanction holdings in Libya to resume business there, and invited Tripoli to lay the groundwork for eventually normalizing relations by establishing a diplomatic interests section—but not an embassy—in Washington.

Doing so will help "to facilitate our cooperation in the elimination of WMD and to lay the foundation for more extensive diplomatic relations in the future," said McClellan.

The United States, in turn, will beef up its staff levels at its interests section in Tripoli, and explore cooperation on humanitarian issues, starting with a US medical mission that heads to Libya Feb. 28.

"There's a new atmosphere. We're working on a new partnership with the United States, France and Europe," Libyan Foreign Minister Abdelrahman Shalgham said in the Libyan Mediterranean coastal city Sirte.

The shift came after Libya formally recanted a recent statement by its prime minister rejecting responsibility for the 1988 bombing of a PanAm airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people, including 181 Americans.

Libya had written to the UN Security Council in August 2003, accepting responsibility for Libyan officials involved in the bombing. The council lifted international sanctions against Libya one month later. *AFP*

Bird flu outbreaks hit Japan

TOKYO—Japan was hit by another suspected case of bird flu, the second possible outbreak this week, after 10,000 chickens were found dead in the southwest, an official said Friday.

Three of the dead birds tested positive for avian flu at a public health center near the affected poultry farm in Tanba town, Kyoto prefecture, 400 km southwest of Tokyo, said a spokesperson for the Kyoto government.

"We also tested nine live birds from the farm, and two of them tested positive for bird flu," the spokesperson said.

Kyoto officials are now conducting detailed tests to confirm and identify the virus, he said.

If the tests, which will take three to four days, prove positive, the case would be referred to the National Institute of Animal Health for final confirmation, the official said.

Similar testing is taking place in Nagano prefecture in central Japan, where a dead chicken tested both positive and negative for the disease at two different public health centers using preliminary testing kits.

Anti-body testing for the Nagano bird will be available later Friday. Testing to isolate the possible virus will take a few more days, a farm official in Nagano said. *AFP*

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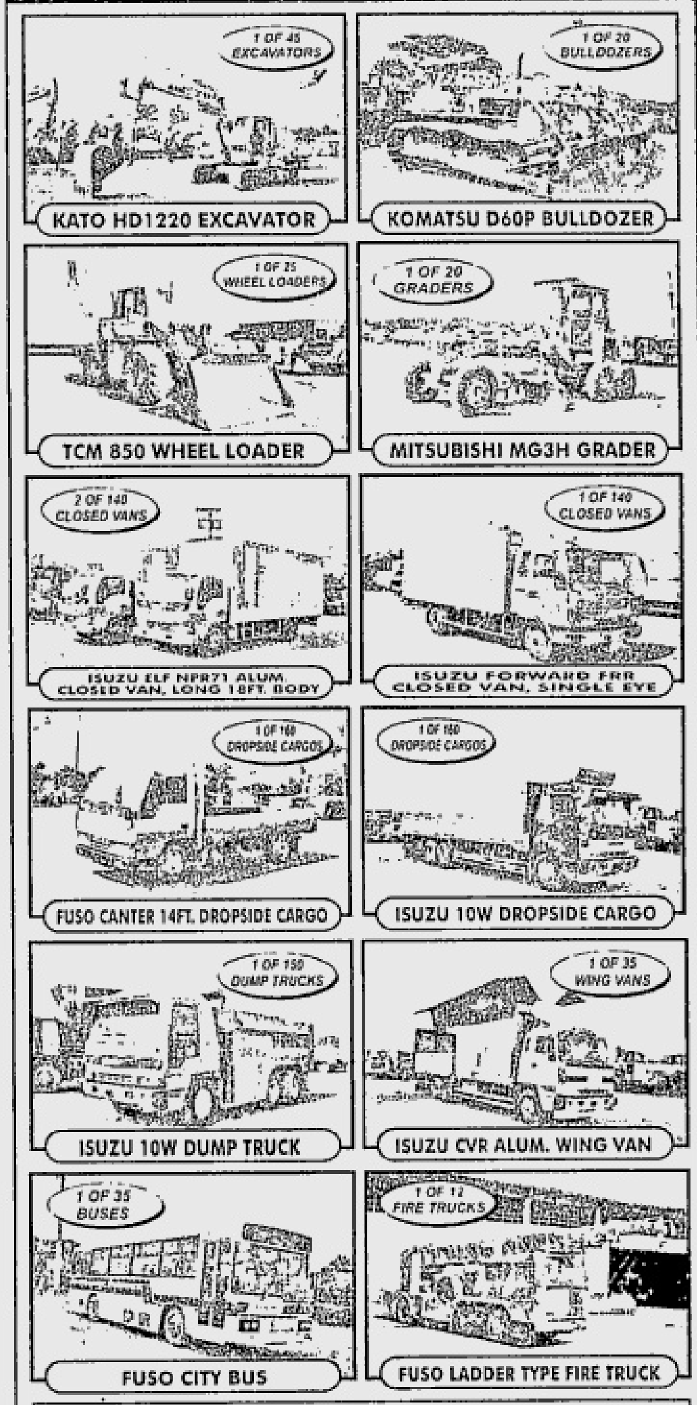

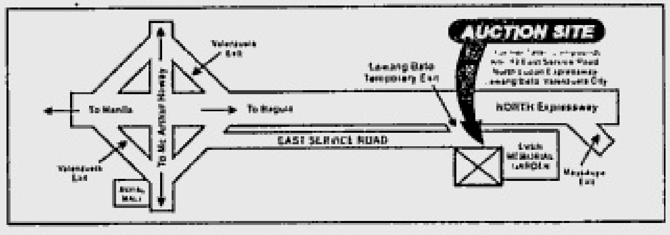

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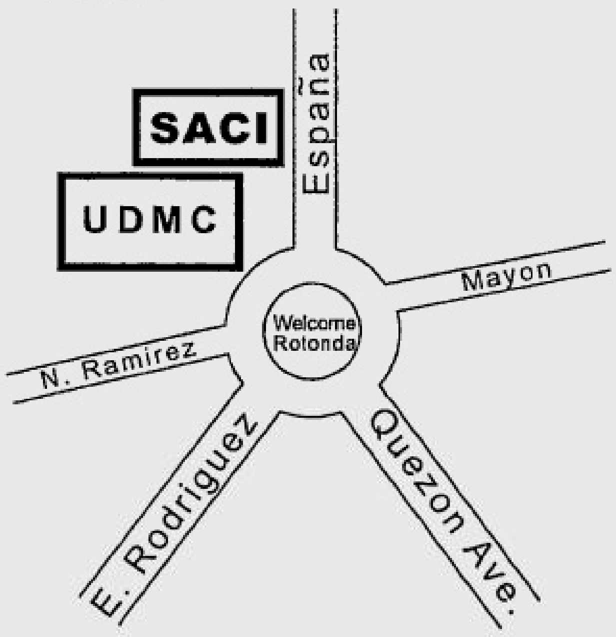
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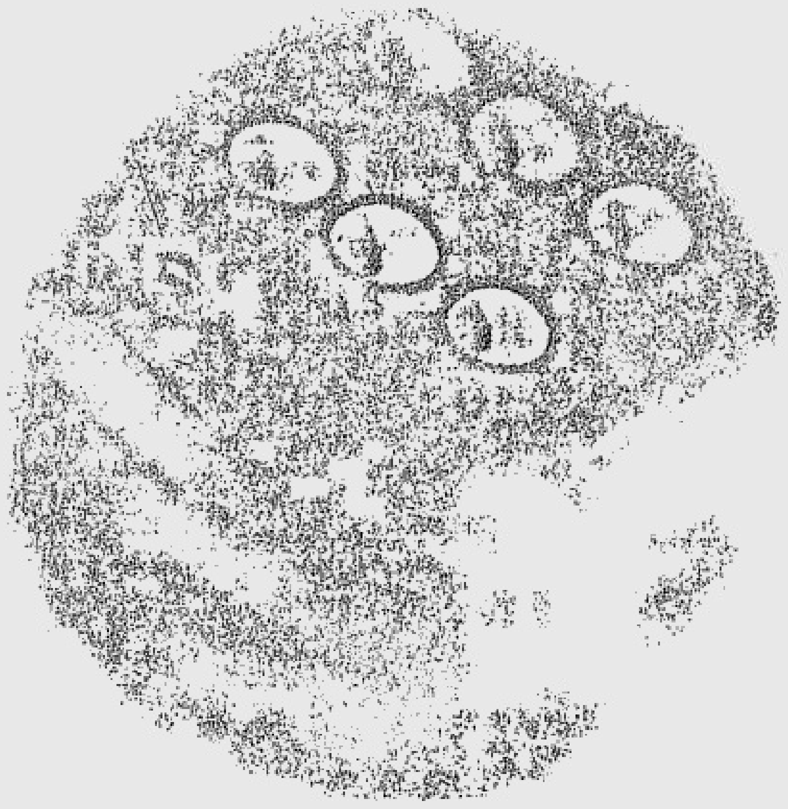
SOUTHEAST ASIAN COLLEGE

Celebrating Our Sixth Foundation Day!



Congratulations to the students, faculty, and administration of Southeast Asian College on your 6th Founding Anniversary!

Hope is our driving force as we strive to establish a creative and self-reliant people unified under God. This hope is inspired by the Filipno people's natural traits of enterprise, creativity, and learning, which need to be nurtured, allowing them to bloom.

Southeast Asian College is one of the institutions that develop such talent. Through its goal of producing professional, civic-minded, morally upright graduates, this school helps push forward our collective dream of a Philippines that is more secure, more just, and more prosperous.

The Southeast Asian College community can do much to ensure the holding of peaceful, honest and orderly elections. Moreover, they can help educate the electorate on the qualifications of the candidates in the 2004 elections.

People are our greatest wealth and we are confident that Southeast Asian College will continue to develop our people, producing Filipino professionals who can stand their ground anywhere in the world. As institutions such as SACI continue to grow, hope for the country still remains in our hearts.

May you remain vigilant in ensuring the success of these elections.

Raul S Roco
Hon. Raul Roco
Senator
(Former Secretary of Department of Education)

Feliciano Belmonte Jr.
City Mayor

The Quezon City government commends and congratulates the administration, teaching staff, and the students of the **SOUTHEAST ASIAN COLLEGE** on the 6th Foundation Day celebration of your school and on the occasion of your sportsfest.

Your theme for this year: "Moulding Minds, Building Communities" manifests the importance and consequence of formal education in your relentless pursuit to upscale the country's socio-economic condition, most especially of Quezon City to which you and your college belong.

This forward step is in compliance with the mission and vision of your city government to work in partnership with the citizenry in building a Quality City, where people can live, work, and do business in a hospital, progressive, and peaceful environment.

The Southeast Asian College has been and will continue to be a source of knowledgeable medical personnel, health care being one of the topmost priorities of the city government, and other respectable alumni whose tireless diligence for the city's continuous development is a fact.

I am confident the administration, teaching staff, and most especially the students of this college shall continue with the tradition of service provision which, as the past have shown, makes you our productive ally.

MABUHAY KAYONG LAHAT!

Delfin A Tan M.D.
President

On the occasion of the 6th Founding Anniversary of Southeast Asian College, Inc., we reaffirm our commitment to provide the best possible education to our students. We remain committed to stable ground that will allow the student to gain knowledge and to develop the skills needed for the expectedly different world of this new century.

Mrs. Edita F. Enatsu.
EVP / Treasurer

The theme "Moulding Minds, Building Communities" emphasizes an ongoing commitment to innovation and scholarship for our hopeful graduates. Moreover, this commitment is being carried forward to the next level by providing the nation's working community the human resource it needs towards that elusive process.

Our institution is at the crossroads of change. We must maximize the utilization of all our resources if we want to make it happen. We must work together to help shape the destiny of our graduates and make a difference in our country.

Congratulations and best wishes to the Administration, faculty, and staff of Southeast Asian College as we celebrate Six years of producing socially responsible graduates.

Our warmest appreciation to the public for entrusting the youth, our hope, to SACI for their education.

MABUHAY TAYONG LAHAT!

Mr. Peter P. Laurel
Chairman of the Board

I extend my most cordial felicitations to the faculty and students of Southeast Asian College, Inc. for contiuously making this college "an institution par excellence".

In it's 6th Foundation Day, the Southeast Asian College, Inc. has again heaped a good harvest, students ready eagerly to find their place in the sun.

This will not be made possible if not for the competitive teaching force of SACI, bringing effective and innovative system of learning, breaking new grounds in Health Care literary, and producing professionals ready for the work place.

Congratulations & Godspeed!

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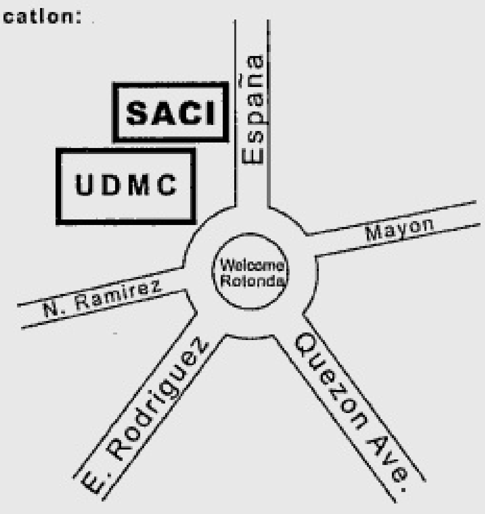

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Japan cult leader to hang for subway nerve gas attack

TOKYO—Doomsday cult leader Shoko Asahara was sentenced to death Friday after being found guilty of plotting the deadly 1995 Tokyo subway ssarin gas attack and a series of crimes that claimed 27 lives.

Asahara, the founder of the Aum Supreme Truth sect, showed no emotion as Tokyo District Court condemned him to hang for "vicious and merciless" crimes at the end of a marathon eight-year trial.

"The accused is sentenced to death," presiding judge Shoji Ogawa said after finding the 48-year-old guilty of masterminding the nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway nine years ago that killed 12 people and injured more than 5,000.

Dressed in a shapeless black sweatshirt and trousers with his greying hair and beard cut short, Asahara was also convicted of an earlier attack using the Nazi-invented Sarin in Matsumoto, central Japan in which seven people died.

Asahara, whose real name is Chizuo Matsumoto, was also convicted for ordering the deaths of an anti-cult lawyer and his family and cult members, and the attempted murder of others.

"The accused tried to become the king of Japan by forming Aum Supreme Truth and being armed. The accused killed or murdered people inside and outside the religious group who blocked his plot. He deserves extreme condemnation," Ogawa said at the end of a ruling that took four hours to read.

"His actions were cruel and vicious and merciless... He used religion to hide behind. The impact of the crimes on Japan and other countries and human society was very serious. He didn't listen to the voice of his victims."

Members of the cult, which was founded in 1984, had testified that the offenses were committed under Asahara's orders. The cult has acknowledged responsibility for the crimes and apologized.

Immediately after the verdict, the sect, now renamed Aleph issued a statement accepting the ruling.

"We again deeply apologize for the victims and their families. We will forever take this verdict to heart, and will further work to compensate the victims," it said.

The judges rejected defense arguments that other cult members—11 of whom have been been given the death penalty in earlier trials although no sentences have yet been carried out—had acted on their own initiative and that Asahara was not responsible.

Asahara's lawyers immediately lodged an appeal with the High Court, said a spokesperson for the Tokyo Bar Association.

Earlier more than 4,650 people had gathered to try to get one of the few dozen seats reserved for the public, said a court spokesperson.

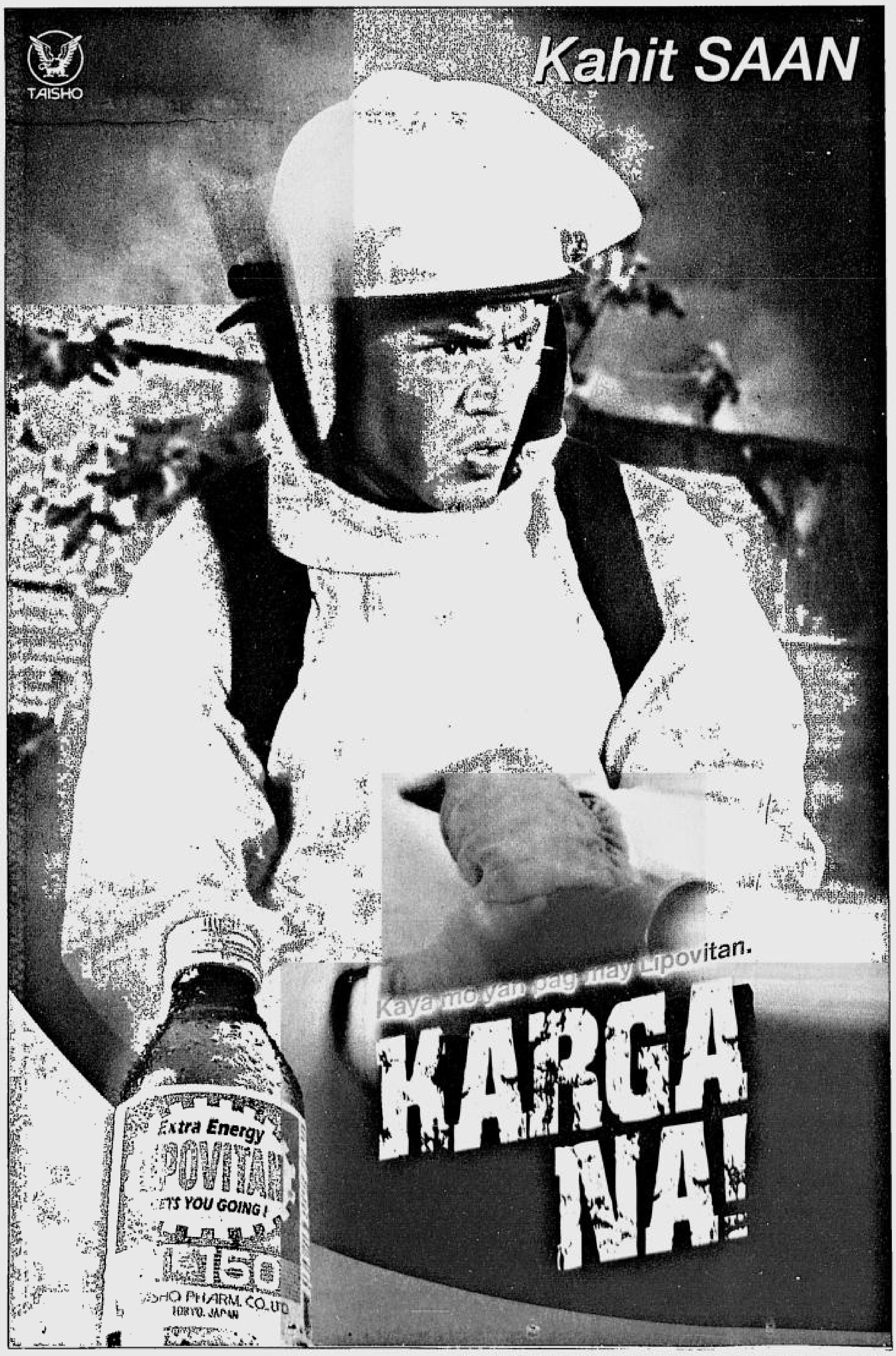
Some 400 extra officers were on duty in the city in view of the court proceedings, the police said, while security patrols were stepped up on the subway network and trash bins sealed closed, according to the railway's operator.

Asahara was brought to the court from a detention center in Tokyo by bus in a convoy of police vehicles, with a decoy convoy used to confuse potential attackers. Major television networks tracked the progress of both to the court from the air.

The charismatic cult leader has been in custody since being arrested two months after the 1995 attack at Aum's ramshackle headquarters in Kamikuishiki in the foothills of Mount Fuji, where the sect had built a chemical plant capable of producing enough sarin to kill millions of people.

The appeal against Asahara's death sentence means there is unlikely to be closure in the case for years, and once all avenues of appeal are exhausted, Japan often keeps condemned prisoners on death row for 10 years or more before executing them. *AFP*

ASAHARA shortly after being arrested in Kamikuishiki town in this May 16, 1995 file photo. REUTERS



ROSIE O'DONNELL WEDS FRIEND
Former talk show host Rosie O'Donnell (right) kisses her longtime girlfriend, Kelli Carpenter, after a private wedding at City Hall Feb. 26 in San Francisco, California. O'Donnell announced her wedding plans on ABC's "Good Morning America," just two days after US President George W. Bush called for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Search resumes for Macedonian leader

STOLAC, Bosnia—Bosnian police and Nato troops resumed their search on Friday for the bodies of Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski and eight others presumed dead in a plane crash in the mountains of southern Bosnia. They returned to fog-bound slopes and muddy trails combed in vain by hundreds of rescuers on Thursday for wreckage of the small plane that was flying Trajkovski, 47, to nearby Mostar when it vanished. So far there has been no sign of the twin-engined craft or its missing nine occupants—including two crewmen and six aides. Bad weather and the risk of uncleared minefields from the 1992-95 Bosnian war hampered Thursday's eight-hour search. "Today Macedonia has suffered a great loss," Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski said on returning to the capital, Skopje, from Dublin where he had gone to deliver Macedonia's formal application to join the European Union. *Reuters*

Yet another scandal for Blair

LONDON—British Prime Minister Tony Blair was at the center of yet another Iraq scandal Thursday after a former minister said Britain bugged the office of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan before the Iraq war. In a BBC radio interview, Clare Short, a thorn in Blair's side since she quit his government in May in protest over the war, was asked if Britain had eavesdropped on the secretary general. "Yes, absolutely. These things are done, and in the case of Kofi's office it's been done for some time," she said, adding that she had even seen transcripts of Annan's conversations. At a Downing Street press conference, which had been scheduled before the airing of Short's interview, Blair called her allegations "deeply irresponsible" at a time when Britain was trying to tackle global terrorism and rogue states. *AFP*

Environmentalists claim victory over US

KUALA LUMPUR—Environmentalists claimed victory over the United States Friday as more than 100 countries agreed to international rules covering the export of genetically-modified products such as crops and food. Signatories to the UN's Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which came into force in September last year, decided at a conference here on a "rigorous system" for handling, transporting, packaging and identifying genetically-engineered exports. The agreement "foiled attempts by the USA and other GM exporting countries to weaken this newborn international agreement on GMOs (genetically modified organisms)," the Friends of the Earth environmental group said in a statement. *AFP*

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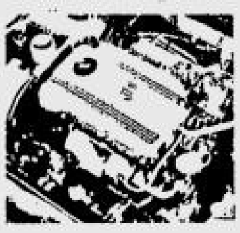

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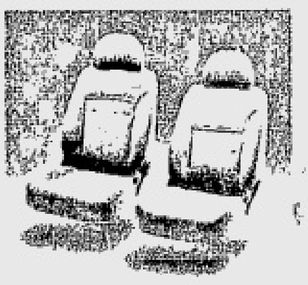

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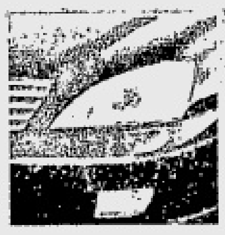

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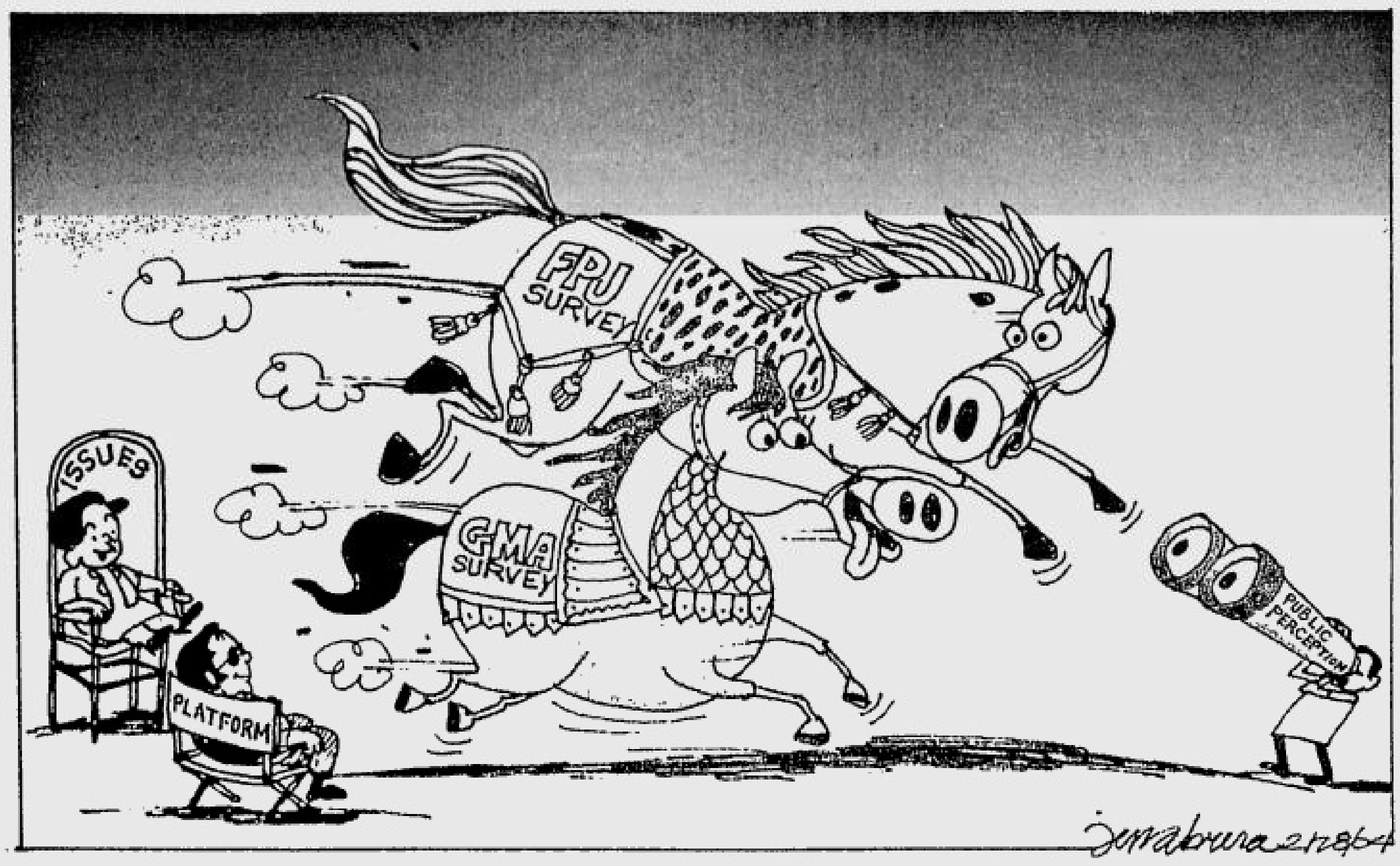

Healthy confusion

EDITORIAL

MAHAR Mangahas, president of the Social Weather Stations, ought to get together fast with his erstwhile partner, Felipe Miranda, now the research director of the rival polling firm Pulse Asia. They owe the Filipino people a credible explanation for the big discrepancy between the results of their respective outfits' recent surveys on presidential preferences. Failing that, the credibility of "scientific" surveys is likely to be completely shattered.

Pulse Asia released on Tuesday the results of its survey taken from Jan. 23 to Feb. 8 which showed President Macapagal-Arroyo and actor Fernando Poe Jr. tied, with 33.4 percent of those surveyed going for the incumbent and 33.6 percent preferring the candidate of the opposition Koalisyong ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino. (A later Pulse Asia survey, taken from Feb. 16 to 20, showed both of them slipping, with Ms Macapagal getting 31.9 percent compared to Poe's 31.7 percent.) Curiously it did not say who had commissioned the surveys.

On Thursday, the SWS released the results of its own survey done from Jan. 28 to Feb. 6. They showed Poe leading Ms Macapagal, 37.5 percent to 28.7 percent, or a difference of almost 9 percentage points. The SWS said the survey was paid for by the opposition for its "private use," presumably including the very public disclosure of the results to counter a separate survey showing results favorable to the opposite camp.

So here we have two polling firms, claiming to apply a scientific approach to taking the public pulse, producing significantly different results. Why? The timing could not have been much of a factor since the two survey periods overlapped. Neither was the sample size (1,800 respondents for Pulse Asia and 3,600 for the SWS), since Pulse Asia claimed its survey had a margin of error of 2.5 percent while the SWS said its margin of error was 1.6 percent.

Pulse Asia said that its recent surveys showed the leading presidential contenders in a statistical dead heat and it could not pick a winner. The SWS survey tended to show that Poe would readily beat Ms Macapagal by getting 9 percent more of the total votes if the elections were held early this month. Both surveys could be wrong, but both couldn't be right.

So which one is right? Nobody can be sure for now, except, perhaps, the two pollsters. But the suspicion is starting to creep into the public consciousness that some people are trying to manipulate public opinion and that perhaps some polling firms are allowing themselves to be used for the purpose.

If the surveys are getting people confused and polling firms are losing their credibility, it may be the best thing that has happened in the presidential campaign so far. Voters who can't believe the surveys may yet prove more discerning than some political leaders or parties who have shamelessly made popularity or "winnability" their sole criterion in picking their candidates. Uncertain about which way the bandwagon is headed, such voters may just take time to examine the qualifications and track records of the candidates, study their platforms and vote for those who can really deliver on the promises they make.

Everybody loves a winner, they say. But who is there to love—and vote for—if the most reputable polling firms continue to produce conflicting outcomes in their presidential surveys? If the winner cannot be known until the last vote shall have been counted, "winnability" ceases to be a factor in the election of national candidates. And that cannot be bad for Philippine democracy at all.

Fruitless search

FOREIGN COMMENT

SERB leader Radovan Karadzic and general Ratko Mladic have been on the run from the international community's justice system for eight years. All attempts to arrest them and bring them to trial have been fruitless, even though Nato has had tens of thousands of soldiers in Bosnia in recent years.

Have they looked hard enough? Has the effort been as it should be?

The contrast is striking when compared to the massive hunt American forces undertook for former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and his closest associates. Saddam is now in jail after he was humiliatingly pulled from a hole in the ground in the middle of December.

If Nato has not taken seriously the task of finding war criminals in an area where they have large forces, it is a serious blot on the alliance's record. War criminals must be brought to justice as quickly as possible.

Aftenposten (Oslo, Norway)

The COA rebuttal

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

REACTING to my column of Jan. 24, 2004, in which I published the letter of former COA Commissioner Bartolome C. Fernandez Jr. criticizing the failure of that agency to prevent several government contracts exposed to be irregular, Director Juanito P. Recio of the COA public information office sent me by personal messenger the rebuttal I invited from the Commission on Audit.

Space limitations prevent me from quoting it in full, as I did in the case of Commissioner Fernandez's letter, because the reply is rather lengthy, and with annexes yet. I will try my best, however, to report its main points, with the hope that I will be giving equal attention to the COA.

Recio says that "the attack on COA obviously proceeds on the mistaken belief that COA is still on pre-audit and that, being so, COA should, therefore, be able to 'stop or nip in the bud anomalous government transactions.'

"The attack is misplaced. COA is no longer on pre-audit but on post-audit since May 1995 or almost ten years ago, by virtue of COA Circular No. 95-006 (copy attached) which, in turn is based on a policy that locates fiscal responsibility in the head of the government agency concerned as declared by PD 1445 or the Government Auditing Code of the Philippines.

"Since the total lifting of pre-audit, the fiscal responsibility has been made to rest directly with the head of the agency who now assumes the primary responsibility of managing, spending and utilizing government funds and other resources, subject only to COA post-audit. This responsibility of the agency head includes the prevention of anomalies and irregularities in his agency."

Recio stresses that on post-audit, the COA "continues working quietly to enforce and enhance public accountability wherever government financial and similar transactions take place, bringing to the attention of management and agency officials irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant or unconscionable expenditures and uses of public funds and property.

"COA takes pride in the fact that although it is on post-audit, most cases brought by the Office of the Ombudsman to the Sandiganbayan are based on COA audit reports.

"...The Commission just lets its audit reports speak for it, but for purposes of transparency, COA reports, issuances, etc. are made accessible to the public through the Internet (http://www.coa.gov.ph). COA now receives and acts on information about anomalies committed by government officials and personnel, thru its 'Fraud Alert' on its website."

The director also points to the COA rate audit of Meralco that resulted in the Supreme Court order for the refund of more that P30 billion the power company overcharged its consumers; that it was the COA auditors who discovered the ghost repairs of DPWH vehicles and their reports are the bases of the administrative and criminal cases against the erring DPWH personnel; and that it was also the COA auditors who revealed the anomalies in the PEA-Amari reclamation project.

"As regards the Piatco-Naia 3, it was the audit conducted with the help of six of COA's seasoned auditors that was made one of the principal bases of the decision declaring the contracts null and void.

"Concerning the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, COA is still on a continuing post-audit of the said project in order to determine which portion or portions of the boulevard are overpriced—the one paid in cash or the two others who were paid in kind. COA will come out with its findings on this in due time."

I am intrigued, however, by Recio's report (and justification) that "the allegedly scandalous purchase of Comelec vehicles has been settled after the COA finding that the Comelec acted within the bounds of law and the exercise of its fiscal autonomy." Settled? A done deal? Weren't the purchases subject to disallowance by the COA as "irregular, unnecessary, excessive, extravagant and unconscionable expenditures of public funds"? Does the Comelec's fiscal autonomy remove it from the power and duty of the COA to invalidate such purchases?

Recio enumerates certain anomalies committed during Commissioner Fernandez's term and when the COA was on pre-audit, but that is neither here nor there. In any case, while the Constitution says that while the COA should operate on a post-audit basis, it also provides that "where the internal control system of the audited agencies is inadequate, the Commission may adopt such measures, including temporary or special pre-audit, as are necessary and appropriate to correct the deficiencies."

What we are concerned with now is the prevention of more transactions prohibited by the Constitution itself that keep cropping up like a bad coin despite the supposed vigilance of the COA.

I wish to also acknowledge the letter of Maynard R. Peralta, who speaks highly of Commissioner Fernandez but points out that the resident auditors of the various government agencies should not be blamed for not preventing anomalous contracts because the COA is required by the Constitution to operate on a post-audit basis. It's the "done deal" excuse again, but he says there was a reason for replacing pre-audit.

Don't shoot the messenger

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

WHEN the results of the Jan. 16-22 Social Weather Stations survey (financed by Manila Standard/ABS-CBN/Polistrat International) came out, showing that there was a 10 percentage point difference between Fernando Poe Jr. and President Macapagal-Arroyo, the immediate response of the GMA partisans and others was to point out the close blood relationship between SWS head Mahar Mangahas and FPJ (first cousins)—the implication being that the figures must have been fudged by Mangahas to further his cousin's interests. Nonsense, as far as I am concerned. Even if Mangahas had larceny in his heart (which he doesn't), he would have to contend with the very professional SWS organization, not to mention the SWS Board, and Mercy Abad and Trends, the organization which she heads that does the polling work.

Now the results of a Jan. 23-Feb. 8 and Feb. 16-20 Pulse Asia survey have come out, showing that it is a neck-and-neck race between the two main contenders. The response of the anti-GMA camps is similar to that of the pro-GMA camp when the shoe was on the other foot: the Pulse Asia survey, it is charged, was commissioned by the administration, and the figures fudged by Pepe Miranda, allegedly to condition the minds of the electorate to set the stage for cheating. Nonsense, as far as I am concerned. Miranda would no more fudge data than would Mangahas. Besides which, Miranda is no longer the executive director of Pulse Asia, his successor being Ana Maria Tabunda, former dean of the UP School of Statistics; the Pulse Asia survey is part of its regular quarterly Ulat ng Bayan report, and is not commissioned. My information is that President Macapagal is not even a client of Pulse Asia, the way President Erap was. And lastly, no fudging would ever get past the eagle eye of Mercy Abad and her Trends, which also does the field work for Pulse Asia.

To counteract the possible bandwagon effect of an apparent "catch-up" by GMA, the results of yet another SWS survey—this time over the period Jan. 28 to Feb. 6, and commissioned by the FPJ group—were published by the virulently anti-GMA daily newspaper, the Tribune. It showed that the difference between FPJ and GMA was still large and statistically significant, although it had narrowed to 9 percentage points from 10.

This puts the anti-FPJ camps, particularly that of GMA, in a dilemma. Should they again bring out the relationship between Mangahas and FPJ? Or should they focus on the narrowing gap? But it also puts the pro-FPJ camp in an embarrassing position: it had lambasted another daily newspaper, the Manila Standard, considered pro-GMA, for reporting that a nationwide poll that it had commissioned, covering the period Feb. 10-12, showed that GMA was closing in on FPJ. The difference between the two, according to this survey, had narrowed down to 8 percentage points. If the pro-FPJ camp accepts that the difference narrowed to 9 percentage points between the Jan. 16-22 period and the Jan. 28-Feb. 6 period, then there is no basis for questioning the further narrowing down of that difference over the Feb. 10-12 period.

In any case, narrowing a lead from 10 to 8 points is a far cry from running neck and neck. So the issue is: Can the SWS and Pulse Asia surveys be reconciled? Or does all this mean that survey results are not worth the paper they are reported on?

There is no question that opinion surveys, properly conducted, can be very accurate representations of what the public thinks. We are not talking about the so-called "polls" conducted by radio, TV and newspapers, where the respondents are self-selected. We are referring to methodologically sound surveys where every attempt is made to ensure that the respondents represent the characteristics of the population from which they are chosen.

The operative phrase in the above paragraph is "properly conducted." How do the SWS and Pulse Asia measure up? Pretty well. Historically, their results have been validated by actual events. Both organizations have called the game accurately, as it were. And it's no surprise that both are headed and staffed by professionals who are recognized not only here, but abroad. And they have one common element in Mercy Abad, who has been in the polling business for 39 years, and whose market research is taken as gospel by corporate clients whose multimillion decisions are based on her results. Abad's integrity is beyond question.

What is left then is to explain the difference between the SWS and Pulse Asia survey results. Actually, if we compare the SWS Jan. 28-Feb. 6 survey with the Pulse Asia Jan. 23-Feb. 8 survey, we will see that they actually overlap. For example, with the SWS, FPJ gets anywhere from 36-40 percent (taking the standard error into account), while with Pulse Asia, he gets from 33-37 percent. Similarly, GMA's votes range from 27-31 percent in the SWS, and from 31-35 percent in Pulse Asia. The same observations can be made in the case of the other candidates.

Any other differences can be explained by differences in methodology (e.g. sample selection, ordering of questions) as well as differences in time period—it is clear from the results that there is a very large segment of "undecideds" as well as those who think that they may change their minds, and this is reflected in the changing numbers as election day draws closer.

The bottom line is that anybody who thinks that he/she has got the elections in the bag has got another think coming. And corollary to this is that if there is bad news, it is irresponsible to shoot the messenger.

No inclination nor preparation

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS the media have remarked, it has become a battle of surveys between Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr., with the Pulse Asia survey putting GMA at 0.2 percent ahead of FPJ late this month, while an earlier Social Weather Stations survey taken from Jan. 28 to Feb. 6, and commissioned by the FPJ camp, put the actor almost nine points ahead of GMA. But after the dinner Speaker Jose de Venecia tendered for visiting German Bundestag vice president Norbert Lammert, the media were able to chat briefly with presidential spokesman Mike Defensor and he told us about a new SWS survey that reduces FPJ's lead to less than five points over GMA. "It's a virtual dead heat," he said. It looks like a very close contest between the two candidates.

* * *

Supporters of FPJ, defending his decision not to join the presidential debate, stress that while some candidates can debate, they can't make movies. But this line may not wash, considering that his movies have not done well at the box office lately, notably "Alamat ng Lawin," which bombed out during the 2002 Manila Film Festival. Of greater significance is FPJ's admission of his total lack of familiarity with the political process, which means his learning curve could take forever if elected.

This month's issue of Kilosbayan magazine quoted Booma Cruz citing the query to FPJ by Australian journalist Kimina Lyall as to what he considered the most significant event in recent Philippine history. FPJ was quoted as confessing, "I wasn't aware of what's really happening... My younger days it was all movies. Politics just passed you by." He also admitted to Lyall that he has no idea how legislation is drafted, "let alone passed," and has never been inside Congress.

Cruz noted media's main problem as well as that of his handlers: FPJ's inaccessibility, such as, for instance, when the Comelec dismissed the petition seeking to disqualify him and the media couldn't get a statement from him. He also cited testimonies from FPJ's friends about how he "does not welcome distractions" and how, when he is in a reflective mode, he can "disappear for days," leaving everyone to hear from him in his own good time. He cites that even FPJ's friends realize this could be a problem should he become president, as "People need to see the President every day. Businessmen are a nervous lot, the markets are jittery..."

FPJ's campaign may have acquired more professional handling now, but what is evident from the above account, which can't be remedied overnight, is that FPJ, like his buddy Erap, has neither the inclination, the academic preparation nor the work ethic for the most difficult job of being president. But sadly, his supporters pushed him to run for their own ends.

* * *

The appointment of Sandiganbayan presiding justice Minita Chico-Nazario to the Supreme Court was shrouded in mystery from the start. Just when she was supposed to take her oath at Malacañang two weeks ago, the event was suddenly canceled without any explanation. Recently the appointment was withdrawn by President Macapagal, reportedly after concern had been raised by civil society groups. A factor that may have influenced GMA to take the appointment back was a position paper authored by former Senate President Jovito Salonga and UP College of Law Prof. Florin Hilbay, and published prior to Nazario's appointment, wherein they criticized her for her decision to allow former President Estrada to leave for the United States for medical treatment. The authors said Estrada seemed to be merely fooling the people with his *urong-sulong* move on his US treatment and that this was unfair and unjust to the people. Salonga also stressed his criticism of Nazario's move at the forum sponsored by the UP College of Law and Kilosbayan, in the presence of the guest speaker, GMA. That she withdrew the appointment, however, is a tribute to GMA's sensitivity to public opinion.

* * *

Sen. Joker Arroyo was recently asked by an ABS-CBN team whether Edsa I had failed in the light of the country's current state of affairs. With a trace of irritation, he lamented that this "sickening" question is asked every year and proceeded to explain Edsa in a different perspective. He stressed that when the people spontaneously trooped to Edsa to support the rebel troops against Marcos, they did so with one objective in mind: to overthrow the dictatorship and restore democracy. The people did not go to Edsa believing that when it was all over, we would have a galloping economic growth rate, and that the peace and order and Muslim and communist insurgencies would be contained, he asserted, so that it's unfair to tie up Edsa People Power with the country's failure to progress. "That the leaders over the years have failed to make the country great has absolutely no connection with Edsa as an event," Arroyo said. He also stressed that the fact that RP remains a functioning constitutional democracy with the freedoms and elections that go with it means that Edsa has been, and still is, a success.

* * *

I agree with Joker that we Filipinos do not know how to count or recognize our blessings. We should never forget that driving Marcos out and restoring democracy were very big accomplishments that we should all be proud of, never mind if that democracy appears so imperfect. Our lack of appreciation for Edsa only shows that our approach as a people to nation-building remains quite immature; we think it can be conjured with a magic wand, in this case Edsa I, when actually building a nation is like building a great cathedral—it is built stone by stone day by day, year by year, through the collective efforts of a multitude.

Where does hope lie?

COMMENTARY

Denis Murphy

"WHERE does hope lie?" two Jesuit priests from New York, one of them my brother, asked recently after a short visit here.

They found Manila's poverty staggering, and rightly or wrongly thought little of the Church's population and social action work. People they talked with mostly told jokes about the elections, so they didn't take our politics seriously. They found it hard to understand the indifference of the rich to the poor living right beside them.

Despite their admiration for the poor of Baseco and other areas, for the country's long resistance to oppression, and for some individuals they met, they saw little reason for hope. They wanted to know where people here looked for hope. They asked Filipinos to give the grounds for the hope that is in them, as St. Paul required of the early Christians.

Where does hope lie? It's a good question that each person should answer. I must say I saw much more reason for hope in the places and persons we visited than the two priests did. Maybe I know more about the context. Maybe the Jesuits were reflecting the pessimism they have about the Church in the United States. Also they are New Yorkers and not used to liking very much outside their city.

We visited old churches in Rizal with Fr. Robert Reyes. As we drove along (no running that day), he told them about Gomburza, the three priests garroted by the Spaniards in 1872, and about the role of priests in the struggle for independence against Spain and the United States. The two priests hadn't heard of the Philippine-American War that took some 250,000 lives. Neither did they know the Americans regularly tortured civilians including priests. He told them of the part played by the Church in the ouster of President Ferdinand Marcos and its role through the long years of martial law in inspiring people to work for justice. The Church in the United States has yet to play such a crucial role in national affairs.

We visited the Edsa shrine and told them how the wide street was packed as far as the eye could see with hundreds of thousands of people risking their lives to end a dictatorship. Retelling the story brought home once more to us what a marvelous event Edsa was. Maybe the Church can recapture its leadership role.

> Retelling the story brought home once more to us what a marvelous event Edsa was. Maybe the Church can recapture its leadership role

We made a tour of Corregidor and when we were finished sat in the warm, sweet air waiting for our boat to return. Over 12,000 Filipino, American and Japanese soldiers died on the island. The whole island is now a contemplation on young valor, human folly and the transitoriness of life. All was not war. The dramatic portrayal of those years done in the Malinta Tunnel talked of young couples sneaking out of the tunnel at night and risking shell fire to lie together on the dew-covered rocks. The right leadership might be able to call on such determination and courage once again. The potential is there.

As we pulled away from the island, I looked back at its cliffs and thought of Masada, the mountain stronghold in the Sinai Desert where hundreds of Israelites committed suicide rather than surrender to the Romans. On Corregidor, hundreds of Japanese committed suicide at the end of the war rather than surrender. The visit to Corregidor was like attending a profoundly moving funeral Mass or a Greek tragedy. It was sad but strengthening.

On another day, we visited Baseco to meet the fire victims who live in conditions not much better than those of the Death March or the prisoner camps. Our visitors were shocked at the squalor, but they couldn't help but admire the courage and humanity the people showed as they struggled to build up their lives once again without losing their good nature. The visitors were amazed that the people could still smile at all.

Can change come from the organized poor? Perhaps it can, as it has in Brazil with the Workers Party.

We went to Boracay which is much more crowded than five or six years ago but still beautiful. The Jesuits liked the naturalness and self possession of the waiters, waitresses, housemaids, even the men selling fake Rolex watches, who were neither resentful of the visitor's money or servile, just themselves. We all realized to some extent while floating in the soft water as the sun went down that the country is not just crowded cities with all of their problems, but rural areas and fishing villages with age-old traditions of cooperation and simple living. How do we harness and institutionalize such values for our modern world?

When the two weeks were over, I felt better about the future. I think the Jesuits would have seen it, too, if the sex scandals and other troubles in the US Church and society hadn't been heavy on their minds. Maybe if they had stayed longer they would have been more optimistic.

It's still a good question: Where does hope lie?

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates.

The search for Palao (2)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

PASSING Palapac, they set off for their destination but encountered terrible weather and skies so dark, that even if they had passed close to the islands they were searching for, they would not have seen them. They suffered eight storms, four of them typhoons, with the ship taking in so much water it was in danger of sinking.

Toward the end of July there was a gale so severe that the ship sailed for a week with sails hauled in. During the gale the pilot made a mistake. The water reached the ship's upper deck with the seas buffeting and flooding the deck waist high until the general, embracing the tiller, closed the rudder by himself: something eight sailors hadn't been able to do. The provisions were lost, the jars of fresh water were consumed, and all suffered hunger and thirst. According to the calculations of the pilot they had sailed 300 leagues past the Marianas.

With continuous blows from the sea, the cables over the deck rotted and they lost two anchors; without water or supplies, they were frightened of continuing the journey. But the general was determined to get to the Marianas, fill up with provisions and leave when the weather improved. This determination proved to be their salvation. They returned in search of the Marianas leaving them astern with the wind at the prow. They suffered much thirst and hunger until on the eve of San Ignacio, with the passengers nearly dead from deprivation, a powerful wave washed over the deck and left an enormous fish that they ate for two days. Rainless days followed and with it, an all encompassing thirst so that each one could only drink a thimbleful of water in 24 hours. Finally an obscure cloud that presented itself in the north east apportioned them water in abundance, which they gathered in sheets—enough to fill 80 jars. A gentle breeze and a smooth sea brought them to the Cabo del Espiritu Santo in September without their having sighted land so far.

Finally, passing by the islands of Garvanzos, various butterflies and mountain birds alighted on board, and they gathered fresh seaweeds; but the weather had darkened, so that, again, they saw no islands and could not see beyond the distance of a pistol shot.

The ship proceeded to Manila with, luckily, no one getting sick in the face of all their tribulations.

Despite the trials encountered, the enterprise was not abandoned since the king had so highly recommended it. In 1710, the Conde de Lizarraga, who was governor, sent the Santisima Trinidad, commanded by sergeant major Francisco Padilla, with 86 troops and the missionaries Duberon, Cortil and the brother Baudin, who were to spread the gospel. A well equipped sloop was to accompany them with the friars Serrano and Bobadilla, but was unable to follow, having been lost in Tubac near Palapac.

The ship remained in the islands until Nov. 14 and left for Palaos, navigating for 15 days and on the 30th of November sighted land. They turned alongside in order to come closer and discovered an island that they named San Andres since it was his feast day. Nearing land they sighted a boat coming toward them that was manned by natives shouting "Mapia, Mapia," meaning good people. A Palao that had come with them went to them and brought them on board. They said that the island was called Sonsorol and was part of Palaos. In the afternoon they saw two other boats with eight men each who begun to sing when they came closer, following the rhythm with their hands beating time on their thighs. When they boarded the ship they brought fish, coconuts and herbs.

The men could see the coasts full of trees, and their boats were well constructed and with lateen sails. In the south, they said there were two islands called Meriere and Poulo. They said their island had some 800 inhabitants who lived by fishing, and harvesting coconuts and roots. Again, it began to rain heavily, and they could not alight until the 4th day at 6 in the morning.

The second pilot left to sound the bottom and look for a place to drop anchor. Approaching land in a small boat, he could find only rocks. This was repeated several times, finding the same difficulty in all the areas. Fathers Duberon and Cortil decided to make for shore and plant the cross despite being warned of the dangers to which they were exposing themselves. Still, they insisted. They took another small boat with the boatswain and the ensign bringing the Palao and his family with them.

It was only later that they learned from some Palaos that the native they had brought with them was a criminal, guilty of the most atrocious crimes; he connived with other natives to kill Fathers Duberon and Cortil by beating them to death together with the rest of the crew on the island of San Andres.

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Correction: Elson T. Elizaga e-mailed a correction on the Huluga archaeological site article (PDI, 2/17/04). The lady in question was Tingting Cojuangco and not former Sen. Nikki Coseteng.

The patronized poor

YOUNG BLOOD

Mark L. Lopez

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

THE INQUIRER recently ran a front-page story on a wealthy Philippine politician wannabe who was being built up as being "one with the poor." Indeed it is commendable when people like this candidate attempt to cross the great divide and try to make a difference for the poor. The candidate was, after all, educated in Europe and America, is a lover of horses, regularly frequents the local polo club and has dogs that sleep in air-conditioned rooms (as the INQUIRER article reported). And now she is running for public office, claiming to want to do something for the poor in our society. One of her statements has me quite disturbed, though. The poor are the company she will always want to keep, she says, because "They're never insincere, they never scorn."

Although I am in no position to judge the sincerity of this candidate's motivations (for all we know she truly has a deep desire to serve and make a difference as a government official), I cannot help but point out that motivations alone do not a good public servant make. At least, not the kind we need in the work of development.

Future public servants will do us good only if they are truly able to get off their high horses and muddy their hands and feet with the realities of those they want to serve, and not patronize them with baseless, untruthful praise. Such words have too often been seen to go hand in hand with empty promises or with actions that do not address real needs. I have yet to decide which is worse. The former shatters trust, confidence and the little hope we may be holding on to. The latter has been known to shatter lives, by making society's problems even bigger and by letting precious resources go to waste.

In trying to think of a positive rebuttal to the candidate mentioned above, I am reminded of Mikee Cojuangco who was a classmate of mine in liberation theology back in college. (How convenient that Mikee comes from the same social circles as that candidate—the kind that thoroughbreds run around—the better to demonstrate the point.) For all her social status and popularity, Mikee remains grounded and real when she speaks of her disillusionment with some of the resource-poor groups she has worked with. Right after college and fresh with inspiration derived from the Ateneo de Manila, she got involved in socio-civic work which put her in closer contact with some basic sectors. Unfortunately, she admits, it was not that easy and very much a disillusionment when the groups she was trying to help, somehow turned against her or the goals for which they were working. Ultimately, they betrayed her trust.

The challenge for her, as well as for all of us in development, is to overcome such "setbacks" in the journey of working for social development, to be firmly grounded in our motivations, and never to lose sight of the goal. Ugly realities can either make us want to forget about our dreams or hold on to them more dearly or fiercely. And the latter is what will keep us going on in this work. What is key, however, is to never lose touch with reality, no matter how hard we dream.

Anyone who has sincerely and attentively worked with the poor in their struggle to uplift their plight is likely to contest romanticized and ultimately destructive notions as "The poor are always sincere and they never scorn." To build up the poor as something they are not, is to render them a disservice. To feed on this notion is to keep feeding the heart of the problem of indifference; that is, to be blind to the fact that the poor are human beings, too. As human beings, they can be insincere, or scornful, among other things (think Edsa III), just like their richer, equally human counterparts. It is utter foolishness to think that the wrong that men and women do, knows limits of social class.

To be clear, we serve the poor not because they are a romanticized lot of pure, unfortunate souls. If we do so, we will easily be thrown off when the day comes that reality chooses to bite.

Let's be faithful to the call to serve the poor, not simply because they are poor, but because they are people, like you and me, who have hopes, dreams, desires, joys, sorrows, strengths, and yes, also definitely weaknesses—but who have been marginalized by society and have been given much less of a fair chance at achieving their dreams in life.

Let's also train our sense and sensibility to be able to see through the PR tactics that those in politics will try to use, especially in the coming elections. Patronizing the poor is surely just one among the many such tactics they will utilize.

Mark L. Lopez, 27, has been working in the field of social development since he graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University in 1996 with a degree in BS Management Engineering. Currently, he is executive director of the Jesuit Volunteers Philippines Foundation Inc.

THEY SAID

The apotheosis of Doy

"You have made him a hero, an icon, a legend."

—Celia Diaz-Laurel said of her husband, former Vice President Salvador Laurel, during his funeral marked with full state honors

Sticking it out

"We are losing the best because of economic conditions. I am staying because I know I am needed here."

—Teresita Arriola, winner of Gintong Ilawan Awards, a search for the best principal in the country

An asset in pastoral care

"His being a Filipino is his strength. A Filipino is a flexible person. He (Solis) can deal with all kinds of people and that's the kind of bishop we need."

—Fr. Angel Gammad on the first Filipino bishop in the United States, Oscar Azarcon Solis

Return to sender

"I'm amazed at the character buildup of those who come from the PMA (Philippine Military Academy)... I think he's a factory defect."

—Presidential aspirant Raul Roco on Sen. Rodolfo Biazon who bolted the former's camp to join President Macapagal-Arroyo's coalition

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PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

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SHARP
...... be sharp

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Air pollution is not limited to the thick, black smoke that cars, factories, and trash burning emit.

Inside our homes are miniscule dust mites, molds, bacteria and some of the most common viruses.

Alarmingly, we breathe them in. Some may cause allergies, common colds and even asthma. Air conditioners and filters seemingly give us fresher air. But the truth is that most of these machines do not remove the molds and bacteria present around us. This is the reason why we still get sick even if we stay indoors most of the time.

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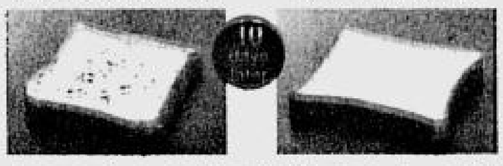

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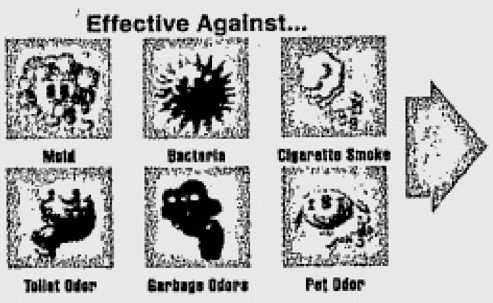

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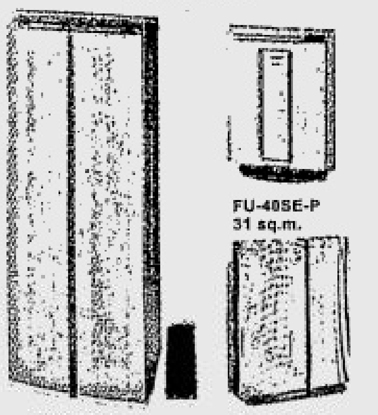
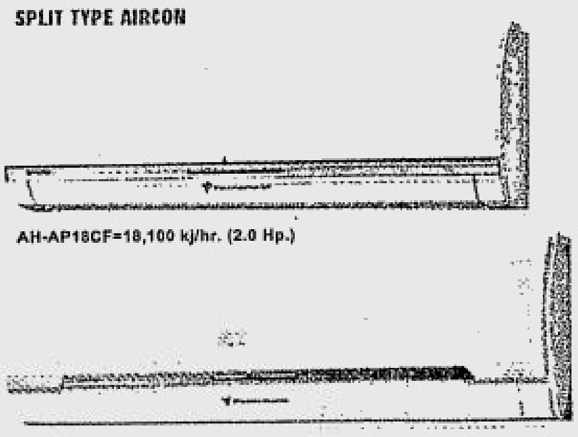
PLASMACLUSTER FOR INDOOR AIR

AIR PURIFIER



FU-40SE-P
31 sq.m.
FU-800-S
61 sq.m.
FU-60SE-P
46 sq.m.

SPLIT TYPE AIRCON



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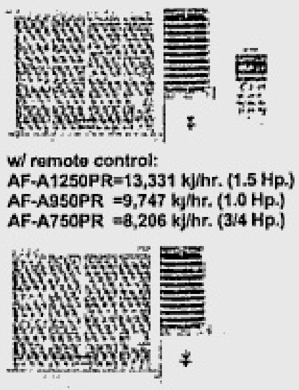

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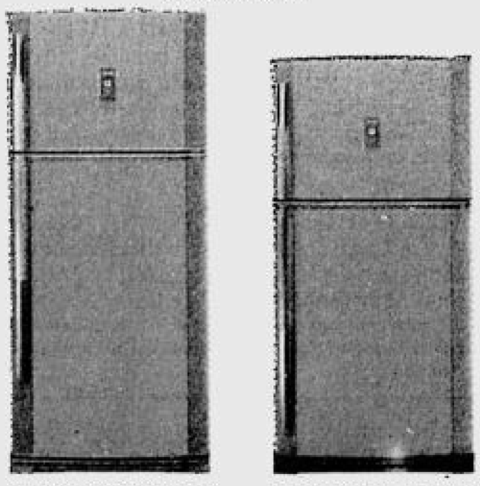

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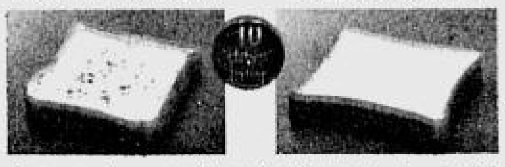

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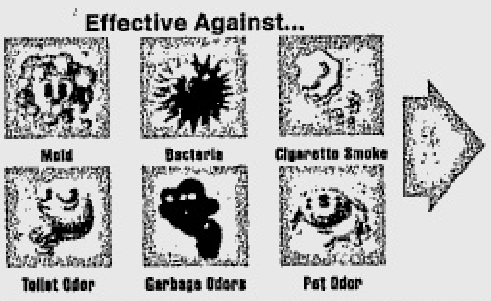

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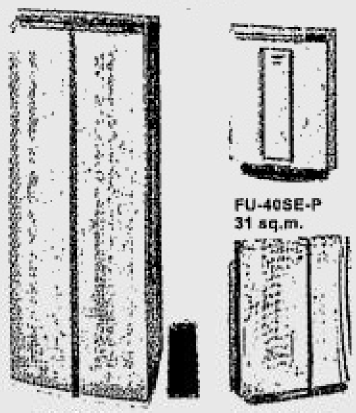

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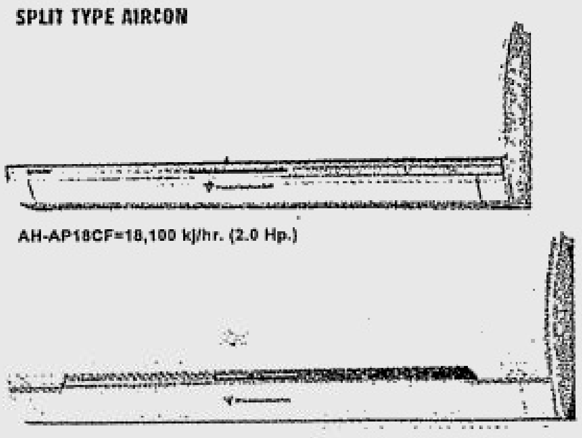
SPLIT TYPE AIRCON



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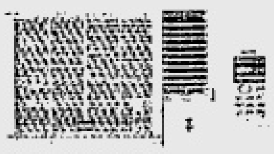

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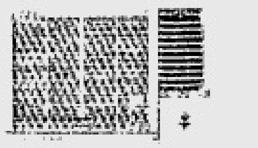

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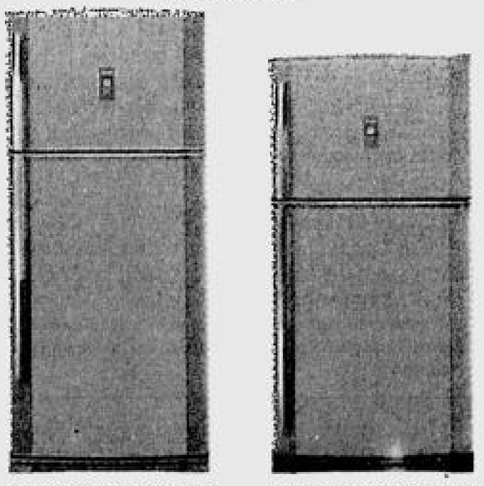

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Ion Plasmacluster

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Italy vows ₱1.6B for agrarian reform, says Gloria in sortie

PAGADIAN CITY—The Italian government has committed some $30 million or more than P1.65 billion for the government's agrarian reform program in three war stricken provinces of Mindanao, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced here yesterday.

Ms Macapagal told reporters during a press briefing that the Italian government sent Deputy Foreign Minister Margarita Poniver to inspect the three provinces where the money will be poured in.

Ms Poniver, who came in with the President's campaign party, said the assistance would deal more on the "transformation of local agriculture products" from the said provinces.

The three provinces are Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Sarangani.

"What makes Italy different from other donor countries is that there is no strings attached or demands in return for its assistance," said Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo.

Poniver said the Italian government has decided to give focus on Mindanao because it sees the need to enhance the area's potential, especially in agriculture.

She said the project would directly benefit rural communities, which became scenes of constant skirmishes between government forces and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"We are hoping that this will help solve the problem in these areas, especially of the minorities," Poniver said.

She said part of the project is to strengthen the peace effort initiated by Ms Macapagal.

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PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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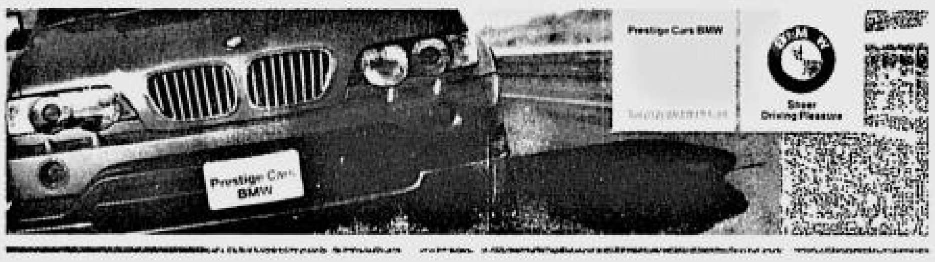

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Italy vows ₱1.6B for agrarian reform, says Gloria in sortie

PAGADIAN CITY—The Italian government has committed some $30 million or more than P1.65 billion for the government's agrarian reform program in three war stricken provinces of Mindanao, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced here yesterday.

Ms Macapagal told reporters during a press briefing that the Italian government sent Deputy Foreign Minister Margarita Poniver to inspect the three provinces where the money will be poured in.

Ms Poniver, who came in with the President's campaign party, said the assistance would deal more on the "transformation of local agriculture products" from the said provinces.

The three provinces are Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao and Sarangani.

"What makes Italy different from other donor countries is that there is no strings attached or demands in return for its assistance," said Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo.

Poniver said the Italian government has decided to give focus on Mindanao because it sees the need to enhance the area's potential, especially in agriculture.

She said the project would directly benefit rural communities, which became scenes of constant skirmishes between government forces and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

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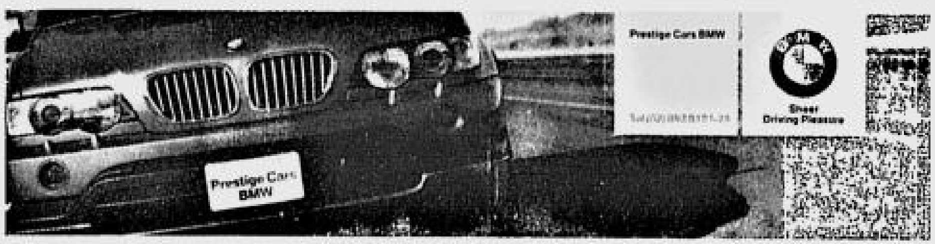

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Prosecutor slain in Negros Oriental town

DUMAGUETE CITY—An assistant prosecutor was shot dead on Thursday night along the national highway in Barangay Sto. Niño, San Jose town, about 12 km north of here.

Assistant City Prosecutor Gelu Togonon, 45, single and a scion of a prominent family in San Jose, died of four bullet wounds in the nape and in the back.

His body was found sprawling on the shore, just below the boulevard in Barangay Sto. Niño.

It was not known yet if his body was thrown into the shore or if he fell from the boulevard due to the impact of the shot from a .45 cal. pistol.

Senior Supt. Amaron Morrok, Negros Oriental police chief, said Togonon was shot at about 10:50 p.m. in a dimly lit portion of the highway.

Initial police investigation showed that Togonon was driving his Honda XL motorcycle on his way home after attending a cockfighting derby in Dumaguete.

The police said they believed that the gunman might have tailed him from Dumaguete.

Togonon's close relatives and colleagues said they were not aware of any death threats that the slain prosecutor might have received.

Acting City Prosecutor Adrian Borromeo said Togonon never confided to his officemates about any concerns on his security. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Kids slain over pigeons buried; kin cry justice

LEGAZPI CITY—The mother, friends and neighbors of the two minors who were killed allegedly for stealing pigeons last Tuesday cried for justice during the victims' burial on Thursday at the Legazpi Catholic Cemetery as they released pigeons, which they said symbolized the wasted lives of the defenseless teenagers.

"We can accept the jailing of Roy and Rolly because it is true that they planned to steal the pigeons but why did they have to kill the two as if they were just pigeons when they could have jailed them instead? What the brothers did was just a simple case of stealing," Alicia Andes, aunt of the Mancanes brothers, tearfully told the INQUIRER.

Roy, 14, and Rolly, 12, were found dead inside two sacks on Tuesday by tricycle driver Juan Bermejo when he smelled a foul odor. The bodies were dumped in a river along the Tahao Road here.

Police said the two were tortured before they were killed. The killings shocked the people of Albay last Tuesday.

When informed by police, Carmen Mancanes, mother of Roy and Rolly, easily identified the bodies of her sons, who were reported missing since Sunday evening.

Based on initial investigation, Senior Supt. Pedro Tango, Albay police director, said the two suffered from suffocation, as they were put into the sacks. The bodies were thrown in a nearby river, he said.

But Tango added that based on the autopsy of Dr. James Belgira, medico-legal officer of Camp Simeon Ola, the Mancanes brothers died of electrocution and other physical injuries.

He said the findings of the autopsy confirmed that of the statement of a witness, who has been placed under the Witness Protection Program of the government.

The two brothers had been reported missing since Sunday night when Carmen said she heard her two sons and some companions planning to go back to the Aeroville Subdivision in Barangay Cruzada to get stray pigeons.

A witness who was with the brothers, according to Tango, said that when the suspect spotted them, he hid in the dark. He said he saw the suspect beating and bashing the heads of the victims.

He said Rolly had a chance to escape but he was immediately followed by a motorcycle.

Tango identified the suspect as Ernesto Dayto, 58, operator of an automotive shop at the Aeroville Subdivision, Barangay Cruzada.

He, however, was disappointed when Dayto was ordered immediately released by the prosecutor on duty upon declaring that the arrest was "unfit for inquest."

Dayto now remains at large. *Gil Francis Arevalo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bayan Muna says it's not waging war on free trade

BAGUIO CITY—The party-list group Bayan Muna is not fighting globalization but is working on the rejection of American trade practices that have deprived the country of a fair deal.

This was clarified by Nathaniel Santiago, Bayan Muna secretary general, to Church groups here on Wednesday.

Church groups had sought the clarification during a Baguio people's congress that intended to draft a "people's agenda" for all incoming government officials.

The congress made a Baguio declaration that opposed the influence of globalization on politics, indigenous Filipinos and other concerns, as well as on the May 10 elections.

"We will oppose any (effort) to change the (Constitution) to tailor fit our (Charter) to globalization," according to the declaration.

A farmers' group in the Cordillera said the region is leaning toward an anti-globalization stance when imported salad vegetables displaced homegrown vegetables of Benguet and Mt. Province from their traditional markets in Metro Manila.

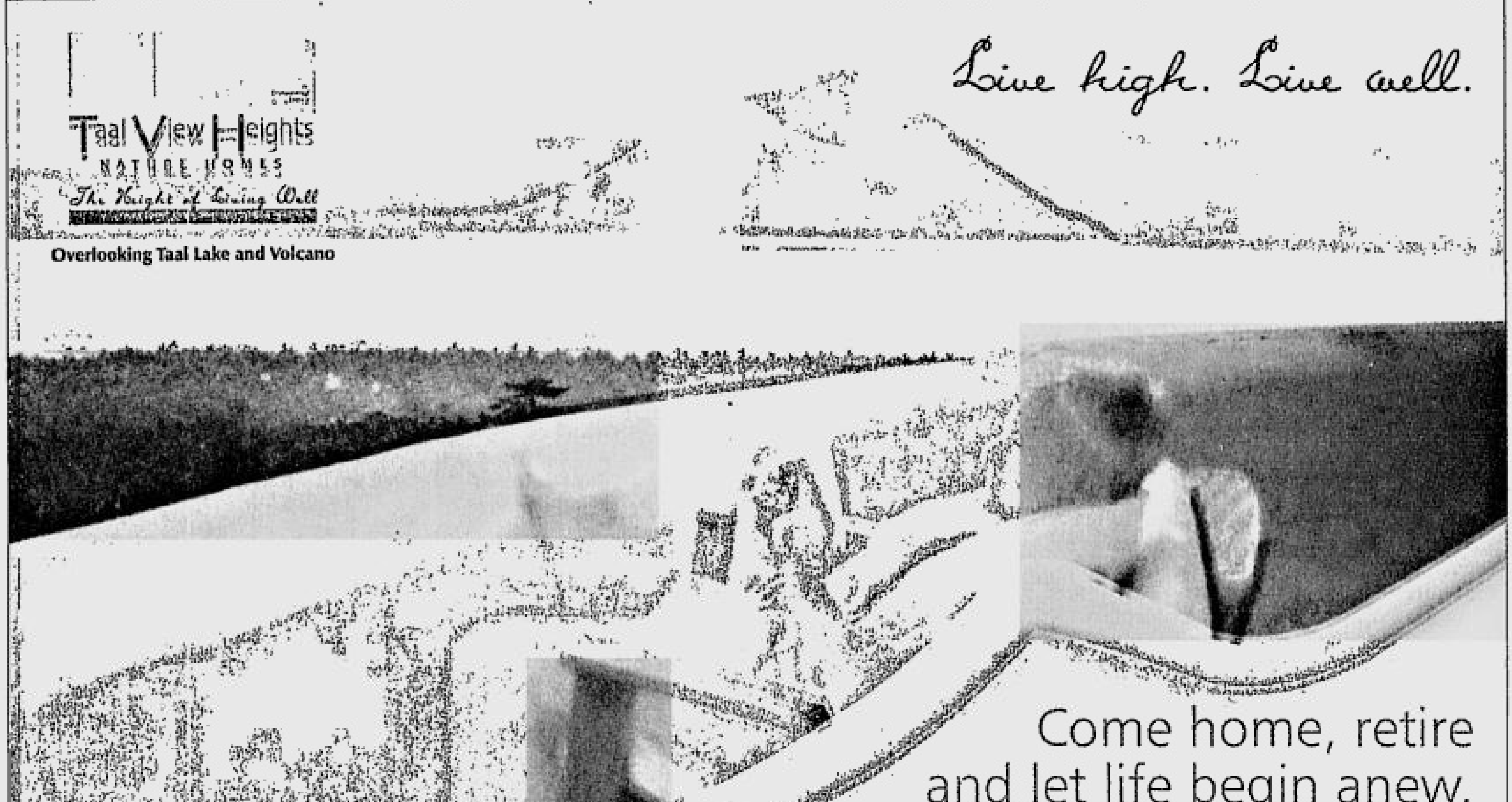
Citing the Benguet farmers' crisis, Santiago said Bayan Muna endorses the advocacy of developing countries for new trade rules that allow smaller economies to continue protecting their industries until these match the production volume and value of American or European produce.

But a Catholic nun said it would be impossible to reject globalization. "Let's be realistic. (Globalization) is here. We are talking about the whole world, we cannot expect to reject the whole world," she said.

Santiago, also a Caloocan City councilor, said Bayan Muna did not reject the principle of a global economy.

"It is true that globalization is a world phenomenon. We agree that the Philippines should be part of a world economy. Bayan Muna is not saying we should withdraw from it," he said.

The party, however, has concluded that free market rules being applied by the World Trade Organization are not as neutral as these appeared because these favor US, European, Australian and Japanese interests, Santiago said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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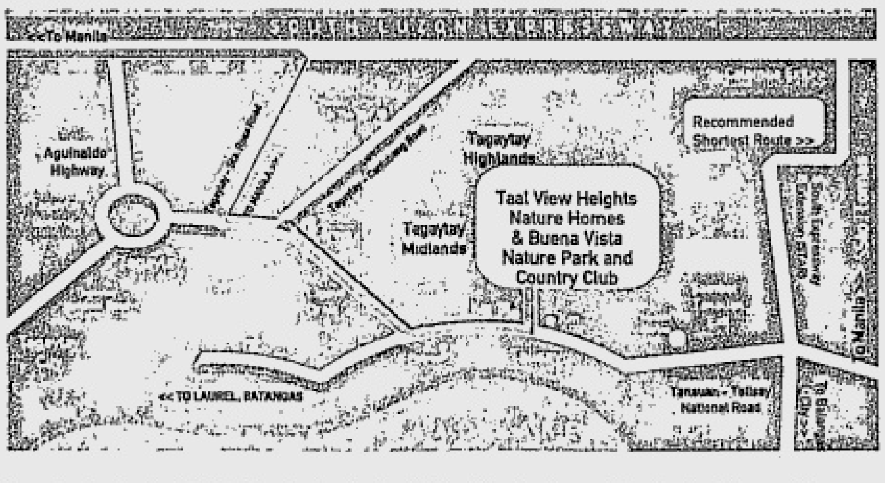
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Wife of abducted Left activist joins search

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Although she is still in a daze over the abduction of her husband, Melissa Portaleza is not giving up hope of finding him alive.

"I will not stop looking for my husband until I find him. I appeal to our authorities to please help me find my husband. I am now confused. I don't know what to do," said Melissa, 28, of Ormoc City, Leyte.

"I am not losing hope that he will be found by our authorities and is still alive," she told the INQUIRER.

Her husband Rolando and another Bayan Muna member Jacqueline Paguntalan, 26, of Taft, Eastern Samar were abducted by seven armed men in Baybay while on their way to a party meeting.

Rolando, Paguntalan and another companion came from Ormoc City. They made a brief stopover at the Agta Beach Resort in Barangay Kilima, Baybay at about 10 a.m. to take some snacks.

They were getting on a red motorcycle with Portaleza as the driver when seven armed men forced him and Paguntalan to get into a waiting Delica van with a covered plate number. The van sped off to a still unknown direction.

Paguntalan was said to have no immediate relative in Eastern Visayas except for an uncle who was reportedly in Manila. Her mother is working in Saudi Arabia.

Melissa and Rolando have two children—Mariel, 5 and Mikaela, 1. She left them under the care of her elder sister in Ormoc to join the search for her husband and Paguntalan.

"I pity my two young children. They, especially Mariel, are asking where is their father," she said in between sobs. She said Mikaela had fever when she left her.

Melissa has been staying at the Bayan Muna office in Tacloban. She joined the quick reaction team formed by Bayan Muna to look for her husband. The search had taken the group to as far as Sogod town in Southern Leyte where the 43rd Infantry Battalion is based.

Melissa said she believed that the perpetrators were members of the military based on the description of the witnesses.

She said the seven were "Tagalog-speaking" and had "military build."

She also pointed out that the military had been hot on the trail of Bayan Muna members who were being suspected of being communist fronts.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Major Gen. Glenn Rabonza, commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division based in Catbalogan town, Samar for his reactions but to no avail.

Alex Lagunzad, secretary-general of Katungod-Eastern Visayas, a human rights group affiliated with Bayan Muna, said they planned to file a petition for *habeas corpus* before a court in Baybay to compel the military to produce Rolando.

CANDIDATE Lacson and his lone entry for the Senate race, Rep. Carlos Padilla, barnstorm Calamba, Laguna after a sortie in Batangas province where Lacson made his most scathing remark against a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, ex-justice secretary Hernando Perez. PHOTO FROM LACSON OFFICE

Lacson says ex-DOJ chief should be jailed for graft

By Mei Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

BAUAN, Batangas—On the second day of his campaign in Batangas, presidential candidate Panfilo "Ping" Lacson hit one of Batangas' strongmen, former justice secretary Hernando "Nani" Perez, right in the town whose mayor was Perez's only mayoral supporter.

"I think Nani should be jailed. The Swiss documents on Nani's accounts and his travels prove that he's guilty. But since he is with the administration, that cannot be done now," Lacson said.

But he was quick to explain that the clamor to jail Perez did not originally come from him.

"The Batangueños are screaming that Nani should be jailed. When we visited the towns of Padre Garcia and Ibaan . . ., the people there were shouting that Nani should go to jail," Lacson added. "I was shocked at first, knowing that Nani is also a Batangueño."

Lacson said the campaign trail in Batangas would also cover San Luis town, and the towns in western Batangas such as Taal, Lemery, Balayan and Nasugbu.

On Wednesday, Lacson's group visited the public markets of Batangas City and Bauan where he was met with handshakes from the men in the market and hugs and kisses from the women vendors.

Since Wednesday, Lacson's group has covered the cities of Tanauan and Lipa, and the towns of Malvar, Padre Garcia and Ibaan.

Asked what he felt now that he was in the territory of the former justice secretary who pushed for the revival of the Kuratong Baleleng case against him, Lacson just laughed.

"Bakit? Ano ba ang nagawa n'ya du'n? Wala naman siyang nagawa du'n di ba? (Why? What was he able to do with that? He wasn't able to do anything, right?)" Lacson added.

His remarks against Perez were even caught on video by the Ibaan cable television and shown in town.

Perez, who hails from Batangas City, is running for governor under the Lakas banner. He is the official candidate of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Perez is still being investigated by the Swiss government for alleged money laundering.

The Swiss government has been asking the support of the Macapagal administration since last year to investigate Perez's $2 million Swiss account.

But during the INQUIRER's earlier interviews, Perez maintained that there was no evidence linking him to the said Swiss account.

His opponent, Sto. Tomas mayor Arman Sanchez, a Liberal Party candidate, was also endorsed by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Sanchez now heads the Koalisyon ng Lakas ng Batangas, a coalition of local politicians formed early last year to stop Perez's return to politics.

Of Batangas' 34 mayors, only one, Mayor Herminigildo Dolor of Bauan, showed support to Perez.

The INQUIRER had called Perez's mobile phone thrice for his comments, but his aides kept on answering the phone, saying Perez had been speaking in a program in Batangas City, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. His phone was turned off when the INQUIRER tried to contact him yesterday.

Poll body urged: Put Tandag in hot spot list

THE MUNICIPAL mayor of Tandag in Surigao del Sur has sought the help of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) in asking the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to declare the town as an election hot spot.

The mayor made the appeal after series of attacks ahead of the May 10 elections, including an assassination attempt on the owner and broadcaster of a local radio station in the area.

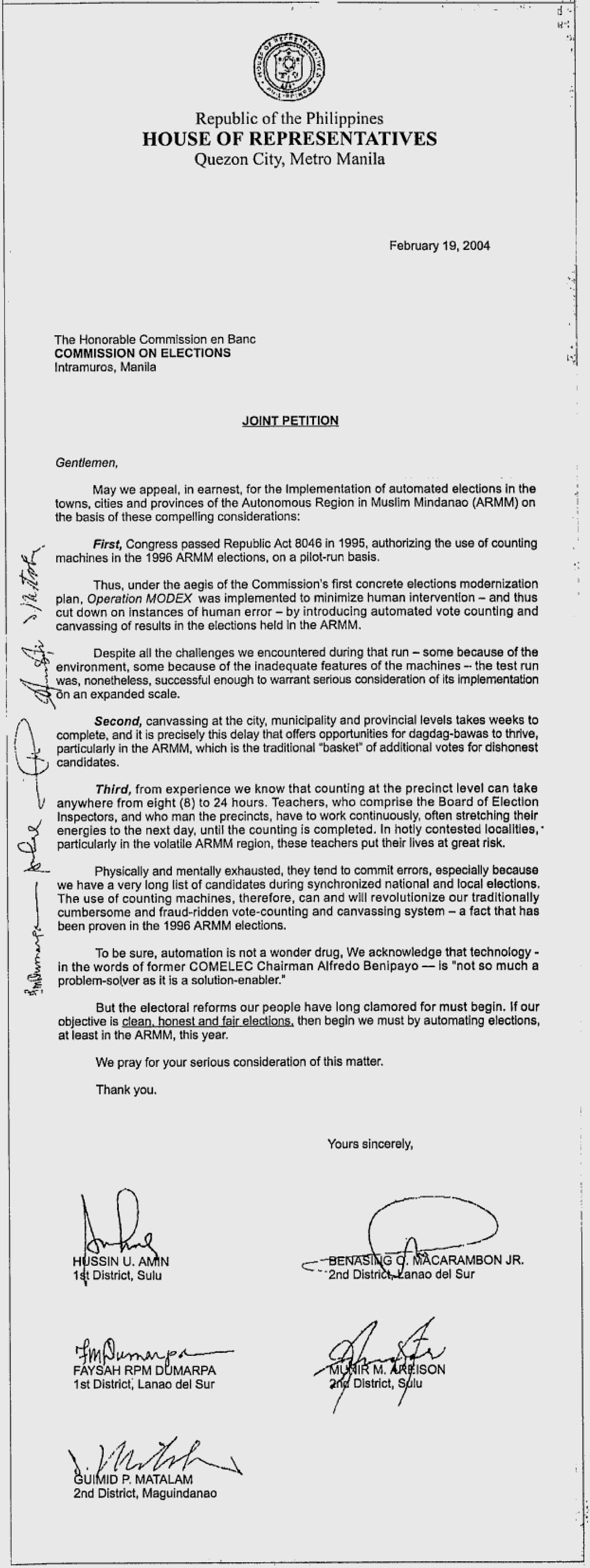
In her letter to KNP standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr., Mayor Marybeth Delgado expressed alarm over the "dismal peace and order situation" in Tandag, which, she said, continues to worsen as the campaign period progresses.

Delgado, who is seeking a congressional seat under the KNP banner, said in a statement that on Feb. 13, an unidentified man attempted to kill Arvin Malaza, owner-broadcaster of Radyo Natin Tandag, who suffered three gunshot wounds as a result of the failed ambush. The assassination attempt occurred after Malaza criticized anomalous transactions involving political leaders in Surigao del Sur.

Prior to the assassination attempt, the building of the Radyo Natin station in Tandag was shot at after Malaza reported other irregularities involving local officials in the province.

Delgado also reported the destruction of the Radyo Natin station in the towns of Bislig and Tandag; the summary executions of suspected drug pushers by "death squads" operating in Tandag; and a gun attack involving a local politician where the victim was bribed to silence him as among the reasons the Comelec should declare Tandag as an election hot spot.

AN URGENT APPEAL TO THE COMELEC EN BANC



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

February 19, 2004

The Honorable Commission en Banc
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Intramuros, Manila

JOINT PETITION

Gentlemen,

May we appeal, in earnest, for the Implementation of automated elections in the towns, cities and provinces of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) on the basis of these compelling considerations:

First, Congress passed Republic Act 8046 in 1995, authorizing the use of counting machines in the 1996 ARMM elections, on a pilot-run basis.

Thus, under the aegis of the Commission's first concrete elections modernization plan, *Operation MODEX* was implemented to minimize human intervention – and thus cut down on instances of human error – by introducing automated vote counting and canvassing of results in the elections held in the ARMM.

Despite all the challenges we encountered during that run – some because of the environment, some because of the inadequate features of the machines -- the test run was, nonetheless, successful enough to warrant serious consideration of its implementation on an expanded scale.

Second, canvassing at the city, municipality and provincial levels takes weeks to complete, and it is precisely this delay that offers opportunities for dagdag-bawas to thrive, particularly in the ARMM, which is the traditional "basket" of additional votes for dishonest candidates.

Third, from experience we know that counting at the precinct level can take anywhere from eight (8) to 24 hours. Teachers, who comprise the Board of Election Inspectors, and who man the precincts, have to work continuously, often stretching their energies to the next day, until the counting is completed. In hotly contested localities, particularly in the volatile ARMM region, these teachers put their lives at great risk.

Physically and mentally exhausted, they tend to commit errors, especially because we have a very long list of candidates during synchronized national and local elections. The use of counting machines, therefore, can and will revolutionize our traditionally cumbersome and fraud-ridden vote-counting and canvassing system – a fact that has been proven in the 1996 ARMM elections.

To be sure, automation is not a wonder drug, We acknowledge that technology - in the words of former COMELEC Chairman Alfredo Benipayo — is "not so much a problem-solver as it is a solution-enabler."

But the electoral reforms our people have long clamored for must begin. If our objective is clean, honest and fair elections, then begin we must by automating elections, at least in the ARMM, this year.

We pray for your serious consideration of this matter.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

HUSSIN U. AMIN
1st District, Sulu

BENASING O. MACARAMBON JR.
2nd District, Lanao del Sur

FAYSAH RPM DUMARPA
1st District, Lanao del Sur

MUNIR M. ARBISON
2nd District, Sulu

GUIMID P. MATALAM
2nd District, Maguindanao

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INQUIRER Visayas

E-mail: pdivis@skyinet.net

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

THE JASMIN beach resort with its sandy beach and a boardwalk leading to the stilt houses and floating cottages. VEN LABRO/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

The jasmin of Marabut

By Vicente S. Labro
Marabut, Samar

INACCESIBLE by land travel until the turn of the millennium, the fifth class municipality of Marabut suddenly became a favorite destination of people who want to spend time near the sea.

Facing the historic Leyte Gulf, Marabut has become popular because of the resorts that dot its shores. These beachfront resorts started to sprout soon after the concrete coastal highway that passes Marabut was constructed. The new highway, which was opened to traffic in 2000, is an alternative and shorter land route from the southern part of Samar to Eastern Samar.

The resorts in Marabut range from the privately owned to the classy commercial ones. Among the resorts' come-ons are the palm-fringed beaches (strip of white sand or pebbles), native huts, floating cottages, unique rock formations and a place where one can go kayaking, biking and other nature exploration activities.

These resorts could be reached by a one-hour land travel from Tacloban City, passing through the picturesque San Juanico Bridge and the ancient town of Basey, which is famous for its unique caves and *banig* (woven mat).

In fact, these resorts are now giving their counterparts in Tacloban City and nearby Leyte towns a stiff competition.

Among these resorts, the one that usually catches the eyes of travelers cruising the highway is the Jasmin Beachfront owned by JED Marabut Resort Co. and was opened just last Aug. 9, 2003. The place, however, is more popular by its old name, Jasmin Beach Resort, which has operated for three years until the new owners took over and developed the place.

Mediterranean design

While other resorts have nipa huts, Jasmin Beachfront has three Mediterranean design structures for guests' accommodations. One of these is a two-story building with five dormitory-type rooms that can house 14 persons per room on the upper floor. Its ground floor has a spacious function room that could accommodate more than 200 persons.

A one-story building on the other side also provides rooms for those staying overnight or longer in the resort. The building, which also faces the sea, has eight rooms that are good for four persons each.

In the middle of the row of concrete buildings is the restaurant that offers customers and travelers delectable food. With the resort open 24 hours a day, travelers usually make a stopover and take their meal at the restaurant, which offers short orders or fast-food fare for customers.

Managing a restaurant is not new to the lady manager of Jasmin Beachfront, Myrna Dy, whose family once owned the popular, fully air-conditioned Jady's Restaurant in Catbalogan, the capital town of Samar located about 150 kilometers northwest from Marabut.

Myrna is an elementary education graduate but has been handling several businesses now since after she married her husband Jimmy in 1972. But she admits that most of the business ideas came from her husband and that they both make the "big decisions" regarding their businesses.

From waiter to resort owner

The restaurant business is not new to 56-year-old Jimmy Dy. He started as a waiter in 1966 at the then famous Eugene's Restaurant in Cubao, Quezon City. This was after he stopped schooling due to lack of money.

Jimmy's Chinese father died while he was just 14 years old, leaving behind his mother, who earned a living as a beautician, to take care of a brood of ten. Shortly after graduating from high school in his hometown of Catbalogan, Jimmy sought greener pastures in the big city. He took a commerce course in a university in Manila but had to stop his studies two years after.

After a brief stint as waiter, a nightclub in Olongapo City hired him to manage the place. Then he was pirated and became the manager of a big hotel and restaurant in Olongapo until 1972 when he decided to return to Catbalogan. He also got married that year.

With his savings, he first ventured into trawl fishing and then into fish trading, by buying cheap fishes in Samar and selling these in Manila at a higher price.

He closed his restaurant in 1995 but the following year he opened a glassware store in Catbalogan and in the following year, he bought and operated a fishpond in Bohol.

Myrna has been co-managing, if not managing all the family businesses since 1986, when Jimmy was appointed board member of Samar. He is still a board member of the province.

Managing the family business, however, came naturally to Myrna. Her secret is that she treats all her staff equally and as members of the family. She also gives them monetary incentives on top of their salaries especially when business is good.

Myrna can now give more time to managing the family business since all the couple's five children are now professionals: a law graduate, a medical doctor, an electronic communications engineer, an industrial engineer, and a marketing management graduate, who is presently taking his Masters in Business Administration course at San Beda.

Seeing Marabut as a potential area for beach resorts, the Dy couple decided to invest in the area. But the price of land there had risen since after the opening of the concrete highway. So they decided to take in partners. One of their partners is the owner of the land where the resort stands; the other is a lawyer. The couple, however, is the major stockholder of the business enterprise, putting up millions of pesos in capital.

Jasmin Beachfront is located at Barangay Amambucale, about 2 km from the Marabut town proper. Aside from the restaurant and function room in the concrete buildings, the resort also has a canteen and a new function-room building made out of native materials.

At the other end of the place are the clean and well-maintained comfort rooms and bathrooms. In between are a number of native kiosks made out of indigenous materials and some beach umbrellas with tables and chairs.

Now only on its seventh month of operation, Jasmin Beachfront has already become the most popular resorts in the area.

Had it not been for the opening of the coastal highway, the natural beauty of Marabut would have remained unseen by the very same people who now come in hordes to the place.

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	Wed	6:00 pm	SF 19	South Harbor	Thu	3:00 pm	CIP
	Thu	7:30 pm	SF 12	South Harbor	Fri	4:30 pm	CIP
	Fri	9:30 am	SF 15/16	South Harbor	Sat	6:30 am	CIP
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Tagbilaran	Fri*	11:59 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Sun	4:00 am	Tagbi
	Mon	10:00 pm	OLOM	P4	Wed	3:00 am	Tagbi

*Effective March 5, 2004

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Bacolod	Mon	11:59 am	SF 1	South Harbor	Tue	6:30 am	BREDCO
	Thu	11:00 pm	SF 14	P4	Fri	7:00 pm	BREDCO
	Sun*	8:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Mon	5:00 pm	BREDCO

*Effective February 29, 2004

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
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Iloilo	Mon	9:30 am	SF 14	P4	Tue	5:30 am	SNPED
	Thu	6:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Fri	3:00 pm	SNPED
	Fri	11:00 pm	SF 19	South Harbor	Sat	6:00 pm	SNPED
	Sat	11:00 am	SF 15/16	P4	Sun	5:00 am	SNPED

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* This applies to SuperValue, MegaValue, Tourist, Business Class with meals for Manila to Bacolod and Manila to Iloilo. Terms and conditions apply.

Manila to Puerto Princesa

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
	day	time	vessel	pier	day	time	pier
Puerto Princesa	Wed	4:00 pm	SF 1	South Harbor	Thu	1:00 pm	PPS
	Fri	9:00 pm	SF 1	South Harbor	Sat	7:00 pm	PPS

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* This applies to SuperValue with meals for Manila to Puerto Princesa. Terms and conditions apply.

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Surigao	Mon	6:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Wed	4:30 am	Sur
	Thu	11:59 pm	OLOM	P4	Sat	7:00 am	Sur

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
	day	time	vessel	pier	day	time	pier
Nasipit	Mon	6:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Wed	10:30 am	Nas
	Thu	11:59 pm	OLOM	P4	Sat	1:00 pm	Nas

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* This applies to SuperValue with meals for Manila to Nasipit and Manila to Surigao. Terms and conditions apply.

Manila to Cagayan de Oro

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	Wed	11:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Fri	12:30 pm	Puntod
	Thu	11:00 pm	SF 14	P4	Sat	11:30 am	Puntod

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Manila to Davao / Manila to General Santos

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
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Davao	Mon	3:00 pm	SF 15/16	SOUTH HARBOR	Wed	5:30 pm	SASA
	Sat	11:00 am	SF 15/16	P4	Mon	5:30 pm	SASA

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
	day	time	vessel	pier	day	time	pier
General Santos	Mon	3:00 pm	SF 15/16	SOUTH HARBOR	Wed	7:30 am	MAKAR
	Sat	11:00 am	SF 15/16	P4	Mon	7:30 am	MAKAR

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Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

THE JASMIN beach resort with its sandy beach and a boardwalk leading to the stilt houses and floating cottages. VEN LABRO/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

The jasmin of Marabut

By Vicente S. Labro
Marabut, Samar

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Seeing Marabut as a potential area for beach resorts, the Dy couple decided to invest in the area. But the price of land there had risen since after the opening of the concrete highway. So they decided to take in partners. One of their partners is the owner of the land where the resort stands; the other is a lawyer. The couple, however, is the major stockholder of the business enterprise, putting up millions of pesos in capital.

Jasmin Beachfront is located at Barangay Amambucale, about 2 km from the Marabut town proper. Aside from the restaurant and function room in the concrete buildings, the resort also has a canteen and a new function-room building made out of native materials.

At the other end of the place are the clean and well-maintained comfort rooms and bathrooms. In between are a number of native kiosks made out of indigenous materials and some beach umbrellas with tables and chairs.

Now only on its seventh month of operation, Jasmin Beachfront has already become the most popular resorts in the area.

Had it not been for the opening of the coastal highway, the natural beauty of Marabut would have remained unseen by the very same people who now come in hordes to the place.

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Manila to Cebu

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Cebu	Mon	6:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Tue	6:00 pm	CIP
	Tue	3:00 pm	SF 12	SouthHarbor	Wed	11:59 am	CIP
	Wed	6:00 pm	SF 19	SouthHarbor	Thu	3:00 pm	CIP
	Thu	7:30 pm	SF 12	SouthHarbor	Fri	4:30 pm	CIP
	Fri	9:30 am	SF 15/16	SouthHarbor	Sat	6:30 am	CIP
	Sun	9:00 am	SF 12	SouthHarbor	Mon	6:00 am	CIP

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for as low as P1,000*

* This applies to Jet Seater Class with meals for Manila to Cebu. Terms and conditions apply

Manila to Tagbilaran / Manila to Dumaguete

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Tagbilaran	Fri*	11:59 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Sun	4:00 am	Tagbi
	Mon	10:00 pm	OLOM	P4	Wed	3:00 am	Tagbi

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Dumaguete	Wed	11:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Fri	3:00 am	DGTE

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Manila to Bacolod / Manila to Iloilo

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Bacolod	Mon	11:59 am	SF 1	SouthHarbor	Tue	6:30 am	BRLDCO
	Thu	11:00 pm	SF 14	P4	Fri	7:00 pm	BREDCO
	Sun*	8:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Mon	5:00 pm	BREDCO

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Iloilo	Mon	9:30 am	SF 14	P4	Tue	5:30 am	SNPED
	Thu	6:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Fri	3:00 pm	SNPED
	Fri	11:00 pm	SF 19	SouthHarbor	Sat	6:00 pm	SNPED
	Sat	11:00 am	SF 15/16	P4	Sun	5:00 am	SNPED

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for as low as P1,140*

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Manila to Puerto Princesa

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Puerto Princesa	Wed	4:00 pm	SF 1	SouthHarbor	Thu	1:00 pm	PPS
	Fri	9:00 pm	SF 1	SouthHarbor	Sat	7:00 pm	PPS

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for as low as P1,200*

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Manila to Nasipit / Manila to Surigao

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Surigao	Mon	6:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Wed	4:30 am	Sur
	Thu	11:59 pm	OLOM	P4	Sat	7:00 am	Sur

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Nasipit	Mon	6:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Wed	10:30 am	Nas
	Thu	11:59 pm	OLOM	P4	Sat	1:00 pm	Nas

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

for as low as P1,600*

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Manila to Cagayan de Oro

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Cagayan de Oro	Mon	9:30 am	SF 14	P4	Tue	8:30 pm	Puntod
	Wed	11:00 pm	SF 2/5/9	P4	Fri	12:30 pm	Puntod
	Thu	11:00 pm	SF 14	P4	Sat	11:30 am	Puntod

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for as low as P1,800*

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Manila to Davao / Manila to General Santos

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
Davao	Mon	3:00 pm	SF 15/16	SouthHarbor	Wed	5:30 pm	SASA
	Sat	11:00 am	SF 15/16	P4	Mon	5:30 pm	SASA

From MANILA to	DEPARTURE				ARRIVAL		
General Santos	Mon	3:00 pm	SF 15/16	SouthHarbor	Wed	7:30 am	MAKAR
	Sat	11:00 am	SF 15/16	P4	Mon	7:30 am	MAKAR

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Deputy presidential spokesperson Ricardo Saludo said both surveys indicated the President's increasing popularity with voters.

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"So even if the survey results were different, the trend or the direction of the results shows the President is catching up or slightly leading FPJ," Saludo said in a Radyo ng Bayan interview.

"We're not fixated on the actual figures. What we are more interested in are the trends and based on the trends, the President is picking up," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

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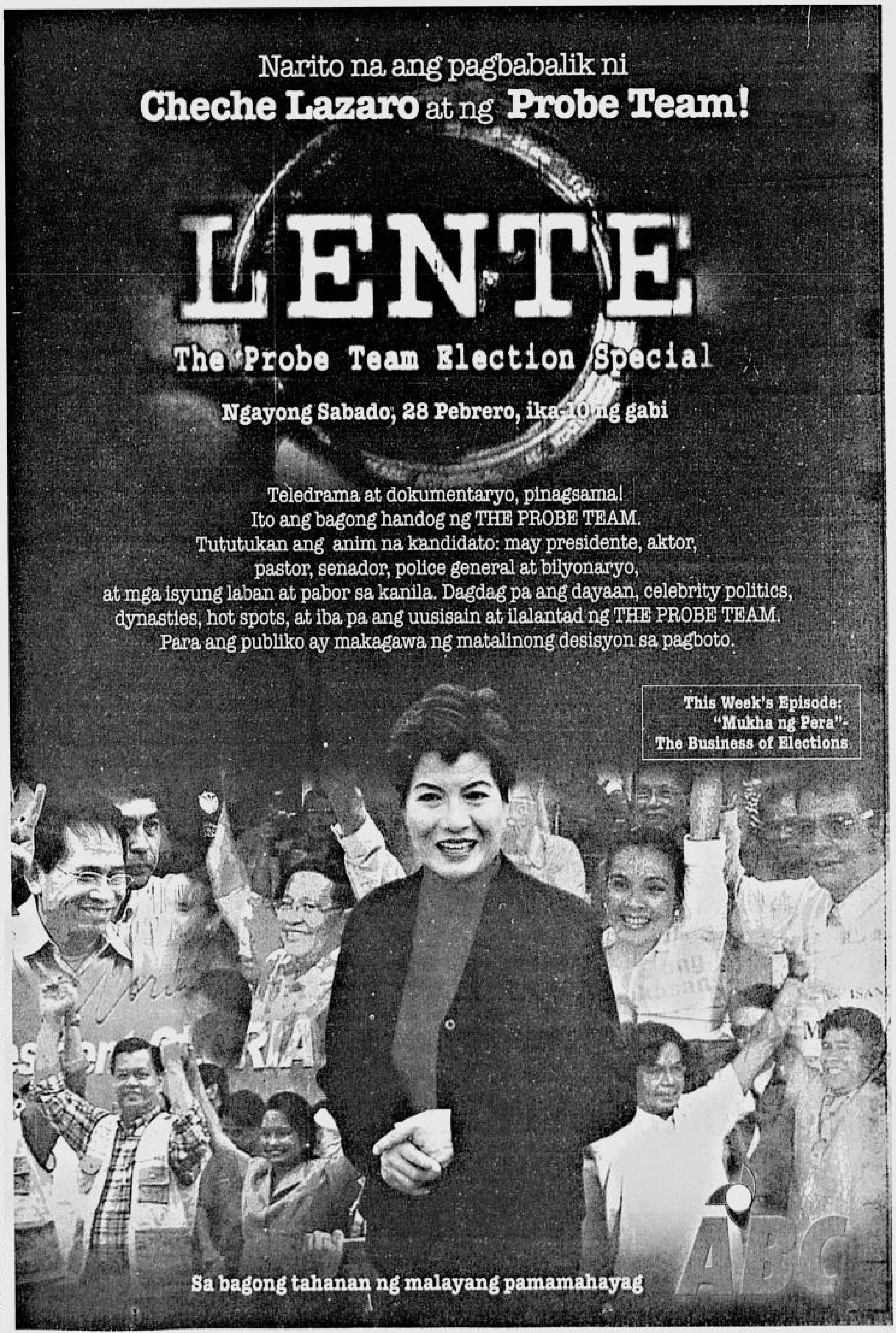

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ABC

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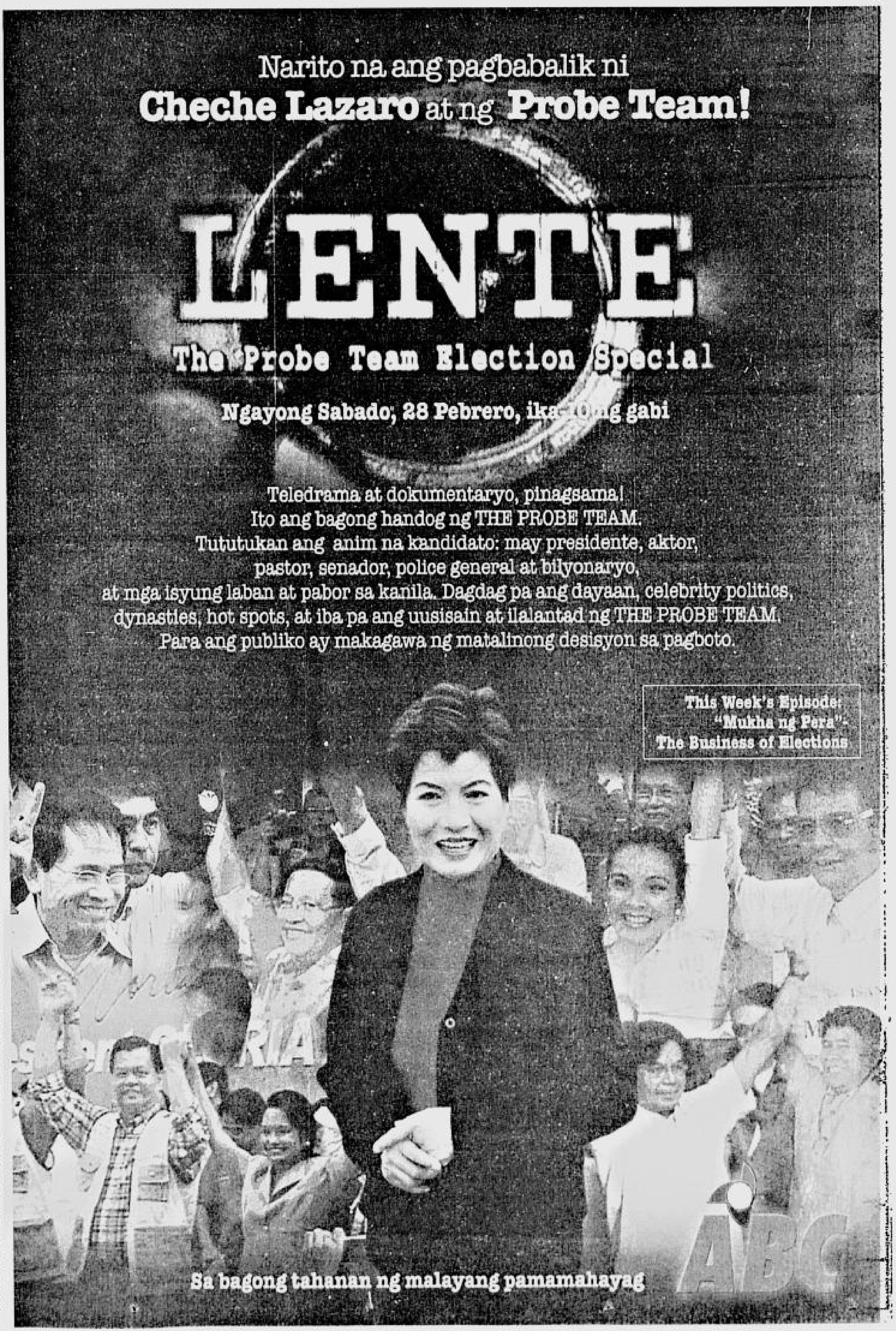
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at mga isyung laban at pabor sa kanila. Dagdag pa ang dayaan, celebrity politics,
dynasties, hot spots, at iba pa ang uusisain at ilalantad ng THE PROBE TEAM.
Para ang publiko ay makagawa ng matalinong desisyon sa pagboto.
This Week's Episode:
"Mukha ng Pera"-
The Business of Elections
ABC
Sa bagong tahanan ng malayang pamamahayag

PASSENGER EXIT

DOUBLY blessed, Nenita Arellano and twin daughters Kyla and Krylie arrive at the Manila port after their rescue from the burning ferry.

EPA

112 missing in ferry fire

From page A1

only remember that one of the incidents had taken place at the Cebu Shipyard.

Previous trouble

Last Tuesday, the ill-fated passenger vessel had already experienced trouble as it was arriving in Cagayan de Oro City, a Laguna church worker claimed yesterday.

Luzviminda Totor, of Our Lady's Nativity Parish in Calamba, told the INQUIRER through text messages that, when she was on board SuperFerry 14 on Tuesday night, she noticed that the vessel stopped suddenly a few miles from Cagayan de Oro.

"This caused me to feel afraid a little bit. But I was relieved to realize that the boat was not too far from Cagayan," Totor said.

The vessel, which had been scheduled to dock at the Cagayan port at 8:30 p.m. last Tuesday, finally docked at 9:15 p.m. because of the delay, she said.

Conflicting reports

There were conflicting reports about what caused Friday's explosion and fire. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Danilo Abinoja said it may have originated in the engine room, while a passenger said an air conditioner exploded.

Virtusio said that, based on the distress call and on reports she received from crew members, the fire started in the tourist section on the third deck of the ship at around 12:50 a.m. That deck includes air-conditioned sleeping cabins and a dining area.

Virtusio also said she received information that the fire began in the dining area, and that an explosion was heard before the blaze took place. But Virtusio was quick to add that the company would still have to confirm the cause of the fire.

"We don't know what really happened," she told reporters.

Loud explosion

Passengers interviewed by the INQUIRER also said they heard a loud explosion before smoke began billowing into their rooms and crew members roused them from sleep.

The 25-year-old Sardo said the explosion, which came from the floor above him, was so loud that he felt the room shake. At that time, he was staying on the second deck of the ship. Next thing he knew, there was smoke billowing in through the doors and he and his fellow passengers were being given life vests and told to move on.

Up and down

He also recalled that he was given a life vest and then made to climb up to the upper levels, but since the smoke was coming from there, he and his fellow passengers were made to go down again. He was among 20 others who were able to get into a life raft.

Other ships and small fishing vessels also came to the site to help in the rescue of the passengers. *(Story on Page A1.)*

Unknown fate

But the fate of about 100 passengers remained unknown. Officials said they might have been picked up by fishing boats, trapped inside the blazing ferry or drowned.

Abinoja said it was possible there were more dead bodies in the burning vessel but insisted "it is too early to say" that the death toll would go up.

By 2 p.m. yesterday, the burning SuperFerry 14 had been towed to Mariveles, and safety officers of the shipping firm were already aboard the ship along with its captain, said Virtusio.

Coast Guard spokesperson Lt. Armand Balilo also said that smoke was still billowing out of the ship yesterday afternoon, indicating that the fire had been raging for 14 hours already.

More explosions

Twice, the fire appeared to be out, only to rekindle. Shortly after dawn, more than five hours after the blaze erupted, two loud successive explosions inside the back section of the ferry were followed by billowing black smoke and walls of flame.

Listing to its right side, the steel-hulled SuperFerry 14 was towed into a cove in Mariveles town on the Bataan peninsula, where it lay on one side in shallow water, still smoldering.

Quick reaction

Cavite police director Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales said only one passenger was confirmed dead and hordes were injured.

He also noted that Aboitiz officials were quick to react and had also sent their rescue team to help the survivors.

"The search and rescue operation is now a concerted effort of several government agencies and private groups. This would definitely speed up the salvage operations and save more people," Rosales said.

He said rescue groups decided to haul out the burnt vessel away from the shore to prevent other untoward incidents like oil leaks.

The Aboitiz firm provided another vessel to haul SuperFerry 14 toward Bataan.

Medical, financial aid

Virtusio also said yesterday that financial and medical assistance would be extended to all passengers, most of whom have been billeted in hotels in Manila. She also said the company would help passengers who would be making insurance claims. Some of the passengers were also handed P500 in cash as extra fare.

If passengers still want to continue their aborted trips to the provinces, she said the company would provide them with rides.

The Department of Transportation and Communication yesterday said it had convened the Board of Maritime Inquiry to conduct a full investigation into the fire.

Coast Guard Apprentice Jess Galicah said the ship had a capacity of 1,672 passengers. It was built in Japan about 15 years ago and had been operated the last three years. *With reports from Clarissa Batino, Alcuin Papa, Juliet Javellana, Luige del Puerto; AP, AFP*

FIRES AT SEA

The following is a listing of fires that hit vessels in recent years:

Nov. 25, 2003—MV Isabela Angelica, a coconut oil tanker, caught fire two nautical miles off Lagoy Port, Barcelona, Sorsogon. The fire started at 4 a.m. causing the ship to sink 90 minutes later. As of Nov. 26, 2003, one of 13 crew members remained missing.

May 20, 2002—MV Our Lady of Medjugorje caught fire off Nasugbu, Batangas. The blaze started at the main deck-pantail section of the ship when the acetylene hose of a wielding machine leaked. No one was hurt for the crew was able to put it out in two minutes. The ship was carrying more than 1,200 passengers.

April 11, 2002—MV Maria Carmela caught fire off Tayabas Bay. The fire started in the cargo hold around 7:30 a.m. just an hour before it reached the port of Lucena. At least 45 of the 324 passengers were killed.

March 8, 2001—MV Delta 2 caught fire after its engines exploded six nautical miles southeast of Apo Island. No one was reported injured. The fire caused the ship to sink.

Oct. 12, 2000—Superferry 6 caught fire near Verde Island off the coast of Batangas. The fire started around 5:25 a.m. No one was injured among the 862 passengers and 166 crew members.

July 27, 2000—MV Trans-Asia I caught fire off the waters of Cagayan de Oro City. The 3,797-ton passenger-cargo vessel left Cagayan de Oro for Cebu City around 7 p.m. and caught fire two hours later. All 570 passengers and crew were safely rescued by other vessels.

April 8, 2000 - MV Tropical Queen was sailing from Cagayan de Oro to the island of Camiguin when the engine room caught in a fire. The boat managed to reach the nearest port with all 51 people unscathed.

Aug. 1, 1999—MV Rosalia II caught fire off the waters of Baslay and Bugtong islands in Pio V. Corpuz town, Masbate. The fire started in the engine room. Three passengers of the 234 passengers died.

April 15, 1999—MV Dumaguete caught fire and sank one kilometer off the Pulauan Port near Dipolog City. The Dumaguete-bound ship's 50 passengers and crew members were rescued.

Jan. 26, 1999—Saint Francis of Assisi, on its maiden voyage from Nasipit to Manila, caught fire near the Nasipit pier in Augusan del Norte. Forty-two passengers and an unspecified number of crewmen were safely taken off the ship by rescuers.

May 2, 1995—MV Lorenzo Ruiz caught fire as it neared the port of Batangas City. The fire, which started in the cargo, burned for two hours. Nobody was injured in the blaze. About 200 people were rescued by passing ships.

May 16, 1995—Viva Antipolo VII caught fire near the port of Lucena, Quezon. The fire started around 1 a.m. at its engine room. The boat was said to have carried more than 225 passengers. About 56 passengers died in the accident.

Rey Leyesa/PDI Research

'I had to give my baby away . . .

From page A1

"It was full of smoke inside the ship, and people were pushing and shoving," Cathy said, recalling her painful decision to part with her only child.

"There was a woman beside me who jumped first onto the life raft. So I gave her my baby to make sure he would be saved. I was left behind in the boat," she said.

It was an hour past midnight. Unable to accept the idea of going down with the ship, Cathy leaped into the sea and eventually to safety.

The BRP Edsa Dos brought Cathy and the other rescued passengers to the PCG headquarters early in the morning.

Cathy said she constantly asked God to save Adrian.

After the BRP Romblon docked, a beaming diver with Adrian in his arms was the first to emerge.

Commander Enrico Efren Evangelista, ship captain, said the crew gave the baby milk to stop him from crying.

Handbag

The pregnant Tubio said that while other passengers took care not to hurt her when the stampede began, she still had to climb a ladder in order to escape the fire.

But when she got to the ship's upper level, she was told to go down again because of the thick smoke there.

"When I see people running and climbing ladders on TV, I always think that what they are doing is easy. Now I know it's not," she said.

Like most of the other passengers, Tubio was unable to save her belongings except for a small handbag.

Asked what the handbag contained, she said with a girlish laugh: "My wallet, powder, lipstick and lash curler."

Hope and courage

Passengers found hope and courage in the Navy and Coast Guard ships, cargo vessels, passenger boats and fishermen's bancas circling them. *(Story on Page A1.)*

"I could see many boats, so I felt confident that we would be all right," said Melchor Ilano, who jumped onto a life raft with his 3-year-old daughter Danica, leaving his wife Vivian in the burning ship.

The family was reunited hours later.

Because she can no longer walk, Eutropia Rasonabe, 87, was carried by SuperFerry 14 crew members to a life raft. And for this her daughter Lilia is "very thankful."

Three-year-old Bryan Vincent Lauron, who was also separated from his mother Sherlita, 36, during the first few minutes of the fire, wept and hugged her when they were reunited at around 10:30 a.m.

Filomena Octavio, 76, a retired teacher from Bukidnon, said she had no doubt that God saved her: "God gave me the strength to walk. I was saved through prayers. The ship officers ordered us to go up, then down. At my age, I am already weak. But I was able to climb up and down the stairs."

Wedding

Another rescued passenger, Rodel Sardo, was heading to Cagayan de Oro to marry his girlfriend Rowena. But the wedding set for next week will have to wait.

Sardo, 25, told the INQUIRER that he was to spend 15 days in Cagayan de Oro while on leave from his job as a security guard.

He also said he was carrying the money that was to be used for the wedding, but part of it—P9,500—was inside a bag left in the ship.

But he is happy to be alive, he said. After all, the wedding rings are with his bride-to-be.

Waiting

Alongside the happy reunions, others were still waiting.

At the Eva Macapagal Super Terminal, Gervin Canasia's shoulders dropped and tears welled from her eyes when she learned that her grandmother was not among the five passengers rescued by the BRP Edsa Dos at around 3 p.m.

Perlita Canasia, 71, had just come from Houston, Texas, where she visited her child.

"I will wait here until I see her safe," Gervin said.

Hector Hibaya has made the rounds of all the piers and visited the PCG office in search of his cousin Sheryl Hibaya, whom he saw off Thursday night.

Sheryl, 24, was to go home to Cagayan de Oro to get the documents that she needed to travel to Iraq, where she was to work in a McDonald's booth to be set up inside a US camp.

He still had to hear about her at 2:30 p.m.

Missing

Four Bacolod-bound seamen were also among the missing: Eugene Susana, 29; Cecilio Bantugo, 34; Eugene Longno, 20; and Rey Alejaga, 21.

At 3 p.m., their families were still waiting at the action center in Pier 4 in Tondo, Manila.

Many more anguished relatives braved the heat outside the pier, complaining of the conflicting announcements from the center.

A similar atmosphere prevailed at the SuperFerry terminal in Bacolod City.

Among the crowd was Rogelio Gochico, whose 22-year-old son Don was on his way home after a futile attempt to look for a job in Manila.

Remegio Alimania, a farm worker in Murcia, was also waiting for news of his daughter Lea Rose, 23, who had quit her job as a housemaid in Manila and who had phoned that she was coming home.

Another passenger being awaited by his kin was Jose Italia, 54, who works at a retreat house in Cavite. *With reports from Blanche S. Rivera in Manila; Carla P. Gomez and Raj Padilla, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Passing ships saved the day for survivors

From page A1

and his crew of about 20 men have yet to complete a monthlong familiarization training on board the ship, which was commissioned only last Feb. 12. The Coast Guard acquired it two days earlier from Australia.

The BRP Davao del Norte, Edsa Dos, San Juan and Romblon, Navy boats PG-379, LC-37, PS-37 and PG-389, and Malayan Towage fire tugs were still scouring the high seas as of 5 p.m. yesterday.

"All our efforts are directed toward safely finding those still missing," Balilo said.

Emergency operator

Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr. lauded the 117 Emergency Hotline operator who reported the fire at sea to the Coast Guard.

Lina said the quick action of 117 operator Marlene Ruiz saved many lives. He said Ruiz received a distress call at 12:59 a.m. from a certain Ivy Chua, who reported that the Bacolod-bound SuperFerry 14 was burning near Corregidor Island.

Ruiz told the INQUIRER that Chua was a friend of ship passenger Liza Sumbilon.

She added that she subsequently managed to get in touch by mobile phone with Sumbilon, who gave her details about the burning ship:

After receiving the distress call from Chua, Ruiz said she immediately contacted the Coast Guard office.

On standby

Social workers in Manila are on standby for rescued passengers of SuperFerry 14.

"We will be here to give whatever assistance we can give," said Jose Baranda, chief of Manila's department of social welfare.

The agency put up an assistance desk at Pier 4 in North Harbor, Manila. *(See story on Page A1.)*

"We give them directions, counseling, and [other] information. We provide general assistance," said Baranda.

Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. said the city government was ready to assist rescued passengers seeking medication or treatment.

"Those brought to public hospitals would be given medical assistance. We have enough supply," Atienza said in an interview.

The city-run hospitals include the Gat Andres Bonifacio Hospital, Ospital ng Tondo, Ospital ng Maynila and Ospital ng Sampaloc. *With reports from Nelson F. Flores and Tarra Quismundo*

Fake doctor in Filipina's death falls in Costa Rica

From page A1

coast about 190 kilometers west of the capital, San Jose, the attorney general's office said.

Officials were processing the paperwork necessary to seek an international arrest warrant and the deportation of Faiello, 44, Security Minister Rogelio Ramos said. He did not release other details of the arrest. Two New York City police were in Costa Rica also working on the case, Ramos said.

Expired visa

Faiello entered Costa Rica on Sept. 19, claiming to be a dermatologist. His 90-day tourist visa had expired, said Immigration Director Marco Badilla, who added that Faiello also had visited Costa Rica for a month in March 2000.

The remains of Maria Cruz, a 35-year-old financial analyst, were discovered Feb. 18 in a slab floor at the former Newark home of Faiello, who was arrested in 2002 for practicing without a license and illegally possessing medical drugs.

Apparently, he continued to see patients in his apartment, including Cruz, whom he treated for a growth on her tongue, authorities said. Faiello pleaded guilty to the charges of practicing without a license in June 2003 but fled to Costa Rica before sentencing.

Detectives were investigating whether Cruz died after going to see Faiello for a treatment at a friend's apartment in New York City last April, when she disappeared. Faiello sold his house in May, authorities said.

Cruz moved to the United States from the Philippines in 1992 and became a citizen 10 years later.

The New York Post reported Wednesday that Faiello worked as a dancer at the Puchos gay bar in San Jose, but bar owner Alfredo Jimenez said Thursday that was not true. *AP*

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

FOUR DIGIT
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(In exact order)

SUERTRES
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4 17 18 26 39 41

KURATONG BALELENG 9 YEARS ON

OSG bent on pursuing Lacson case

By Philip Tubeza

THE OFFICE of the Solicitor General will ask the Supreme Court next week to overturn a lower court's decision dismissing the Kuratong Baleleng case against presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson and 33 other co-accused.

Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez yesterday said in a press conference that the OSG will file a petition for certiorari with the high court to overturn the decision of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Judge Maria Theresa Yadao.

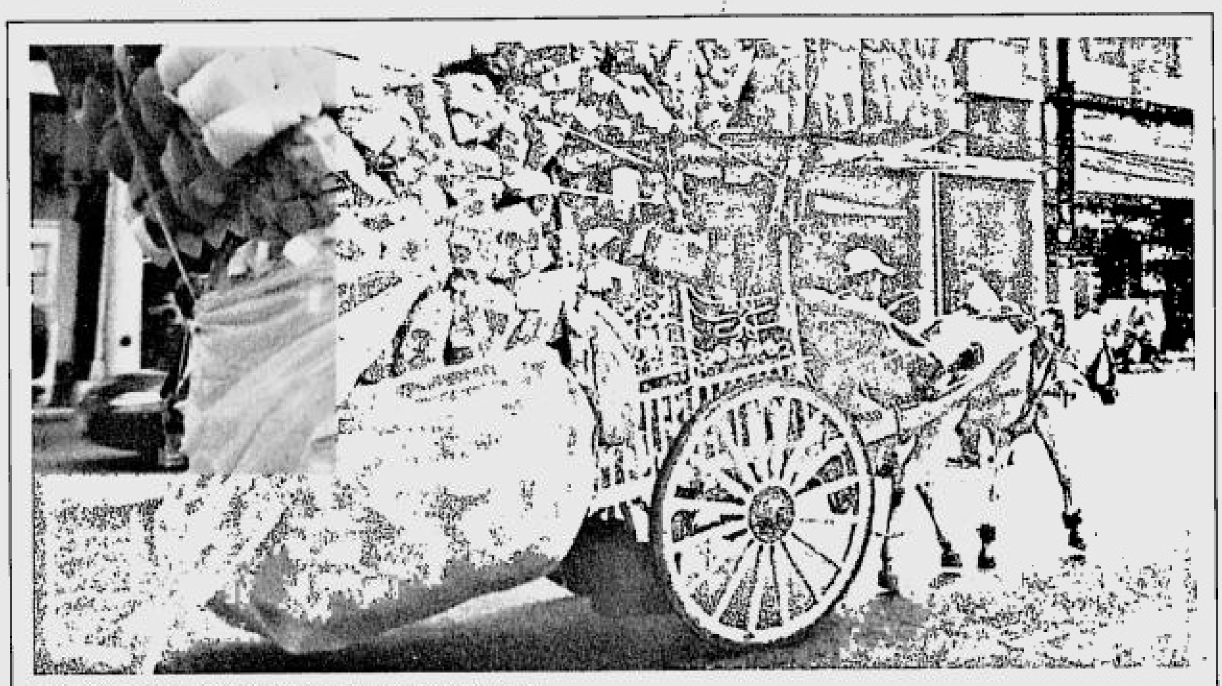
The DOJ had appealed Yadao's Nov. 13 decision, but she stood by her ruling and dismissed the government appeal last month. The government had since asked the high tribunal to sack the judge.

In her decision, Yadao dismissed the charges against Lacson and his co-accused for "lack of probable cause."

But government lawyers insisted that there is probable cause, and that Yadao violated the rules on the determination of probable cause when she adopted her own procedure.

The case stemmed from the death of 11 suspected members of the Kuratong Baleleng gang in Quezon City on May 18, 1995. The men were presumed executed by members of a top law enforcement agency.

"In the case at bar are 11 medico-legal reports showing ligature marks on the victims' wrists, negative powder burns on all victims, fatal head wounds caused by gunshots including one head wound with powder burn tattooing indicating close range fire," according to the DOJ.



HORSE TRADING IN THIS DAY AND AGE
On a busy street in Binondo, Manila is a scene straight out of our colonial past where a scrawny horse leads a *karetela* laden with foam products.
FIDEL FEREN/BANDERA

It will now cost you ₱5 to call Patrol 117

TO DISCOURAGE pranksters, calls made to the government's Patrol 117 will now cost P5 each. Each text message will also be worth P2.50.

Government officials said that of the 2 million calls that Patrol 117 received in the second half of 2003, only 100,000 were legitimate.

Calls to the 24-hour emergency number used to be for free although some carriers charged subscribers on a voluntary basis.

National Telecommunications Commission Chair Ronald Solis said that under a new agreement, telecom companies would retain P1 for each call and 12.5 centavos for each text to cover their handling costs.

The rest will go to the Foundation for Crime Prevention and will be used for maintaining the hotline. *Clarissa Batino*

Family court takes over Rizal Day bomb case

By Tarra Quismundo

NOT HEARING again from the lawyer of bombing suspect Moklis Hadji Yunos, the Manila Regional Trial Court ordered the transfer of the case from a special criminal court to a family tribunal.

Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 54 Judge Lucia Purugganan gave the order after Yunos' counsel, Fidel Macauyag, failed to file a motion to contest the move.

Macauyag was asked to comment on the prosecution's request to re-raffle the case to a family court.

State prosecutor Peter Ong requested the transfer of the case since victims of the bombing that hit the Light Rail Transit in Manila included minors.

Purugganan did not act on the motion of Macauyag who had sought to recall the warrant issued against Yunos, who had retracted his guilty plea.

The retraction of Yunos, who claimed he was tortured into admitting the crime, is believed to be the reason for the move to transfer the case to the family court.

UPIS reunion

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Integrated School Class '84 will hold its 20th anniversary reunion titled "Suaveng Suave sa 20," at the UPIS Multipurpose Hall, UP Diliman, on March 6 at 5 p.m.

The UPIS Class '84 Family Day will be held on March 7 at the UP Athletic Oval, UP Diliman.

Call 0927-2650792 for details.

Nepotism at Customs

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

A THOROUGH investigation should be conducted into the explosion of the ammunition and grenade dump in Camp Crame.

The explosion could have been set off by "inside" thieves to cover their tracks.

My sources in the police said that some supplies were probably pilfered from the building. There would no longer be an inventory because of the explosion.

* * *

The fire that set off the explosion was highly suspicious. It took place during the Edsa 1 anniversary, a holiday.

Had it taken place during a regular day, many people inside the camp could have been blown to Kingdom Come.

If there's any saving grace for the insider thieves, it's that they were kindhearted enough to think of not hurting others.

* * *

Pssst! Let me tell you how that shipment of dressed chicken was smuggled out of the Batangas Port without paying taxes and duties.

My informant at the Bureau of Customs told me that a relative of a top customs official was hired as a sub-broker to facilitate the release of the shipment.

The sub-broker is a former customs policeman now living in the posh Ayala Alabang Village.

It seems that a lot of things are happening right under the very nose of Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo.

* * *

What happened at the Batangas Port is what customs people call "swing." It means a cargo is slipped out of the customs zone without paying the required taxes and duties.

At the South Harbor, there are some shipments that probably were "swung," according to my informant.

Here are some shipments that could not be accounted for:
CLHU2727135; TTNU 3763956; ZIMU2219194; TOLU3046861; ZIMU2437257; SCXU6915133; TRIU2797410; GSTU2445393; GLDU2230770;CLHU2879478; TEXU2238975; CLHU2271148; TRIU1808742; ZIMU2445550; MLCU2408124; PRSU2077783; GLDU2234652; GRXU2245079; CLHU2876571; CRXU1158679.

* * *

The customs official alluded to in the first item has made the customs bureau his personal domain.

He has a nephew at the Enforcement and Security Service, a son and another nephew at the Intelligence Enforcement Group, and still another nephew at the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service (CIIS).

The above-mentioned units are what corrupt customs personnel salivate over because of easy money.

* * *

The customs official's brother-in-law is a smuggler of luxury cars.

The brother-in-law, nicknamed Boy, was a customs policeman who got out of the service to go into smuggling. He is taking advantage of his relative's high position at customs.

This ex-customs cop owns one whole block of real estate where he built a mansion inside Ayala Alabang.

* * *

A councilor of Cajidiocan, Romblon, poked a gun at a Catholic priest recently because of a sermon the priest made during Mass.

Alfredo Ramiro felt alluded to by the sermon made by Fr. Louie Ortner.

The priest exhorted his parishioners not to vote for politicians who are illegal loggers and have rape cases.

Ramiro has a reputation of being an illegal logger and has a pending rape case in court.

* * *

Ortner is very much loved by his parishioners because of his concern for their welfare.

The priest has had a hanging bridge built in the town. The bridge connects two barangays that are separated by a river.

Ortner asked for donations from his compatriots in Germany to build the bridge.

* * *

You can't blame politicians for paying permit-to-campaign money to the New People's Army (NPA).

The police and military can't assure their protection in the campaign trail.

That Isabela congressman who was held hostage along with his bodyguards by the NPA is an example of why politicians need to pay homage to the communist guerrillas.

Rosa Rosal hurt as cab rams PNRC vehicle

By Margaux Ortiz

ROSAL

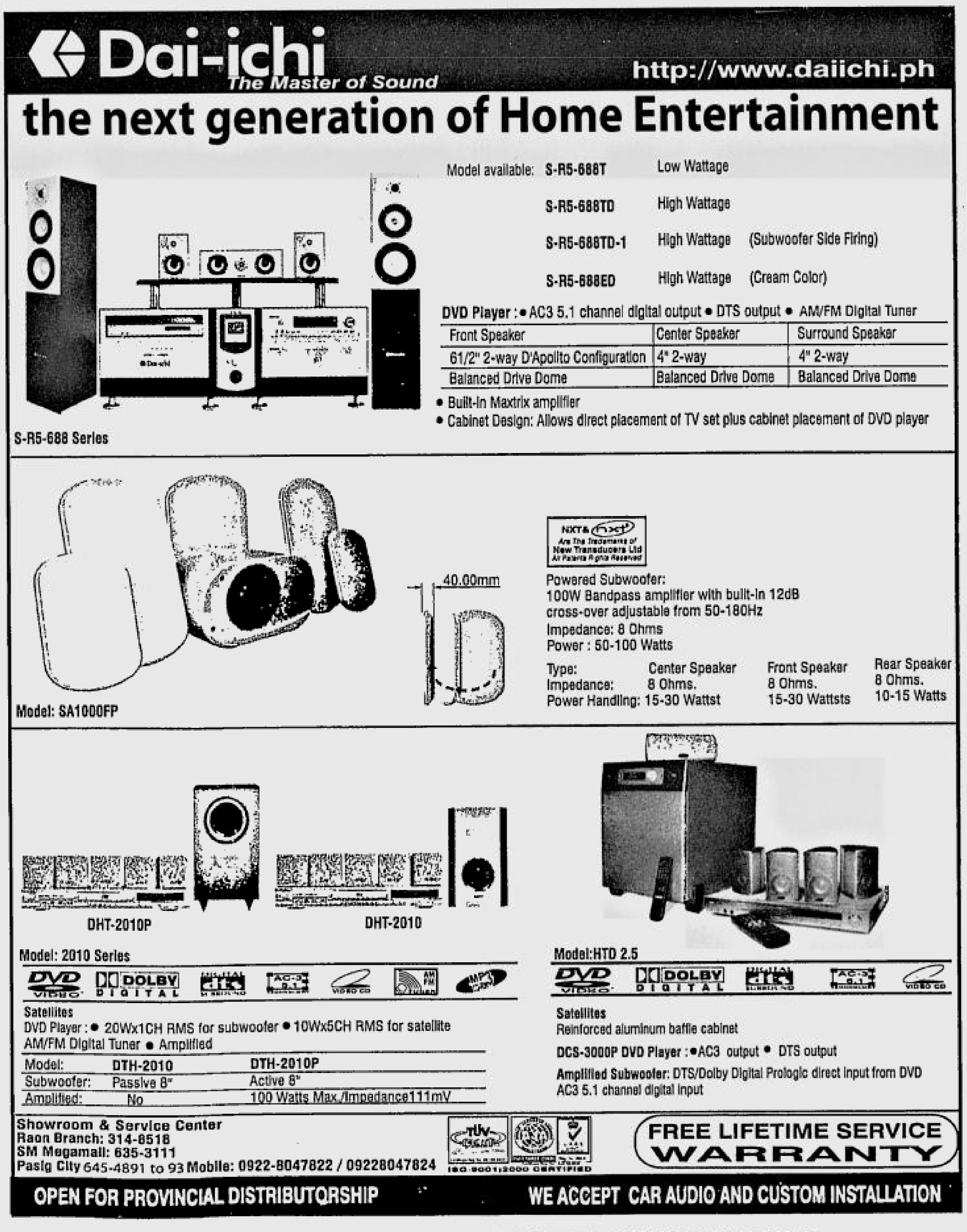
ACTRESS and Philippine National Red Cross governor Rosa Rosal on Thursday was injured when a taxi smashed into her Red Cross vehicle in Makati City.

Rosal, 73, of Wack-Wack Road, Mandaluyong City, suffered head and shoulder injuries and was immediately taken to the Ospital ng Makati for treatment. She was later transferred to the Cardinal Santos Hospital in San Juan.

According to Insp. Gilbert Loteria of the Makati Traffic Enforcement Unit, Rosal's service vehicle, a Toyota Revo registered under the PNRC, was traveling on Burgos Street from Makati Ave. at around 4:30 p.m. when a taxi bound for Makati Ave. hit her vehicle.

The taxi, driven by Eduardo Loria, 31, of Parañaque City, rammed the Revo's rear right side where Rosal was seated, Loteria said.

Police said charges of reckless imprudence resulting in damage to property and physical injury will be filed against the taxi driver.



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DHT-2010P
DHT-2010

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portrait #6

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RP OPEN SCORES

(Filipino unless denoted):

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143—A. Que 72-71, A. Lascuna 69-74, D. Gleeson (Aus)

144—E. Michaels (US) 70-74, A. Fraser (Aus) 71-73

145—J. Pagunsan (am) 75-70, M. Kyung (Kor) 73-72, J. Randhawa (Ind) 72-73, V. Bandhari (Ind) 73-72, Lu Wei-Lan (Tpe) 72-73, E. Estrera 69-76, C. Yuan-chi (Tpe) 71-74, J. Pagunsan (am) 75-70, M. Kyung (Kor) 73-72, J. Randhawa (Ind) 72-73, V. Bandhari (Ind) 73-72, Lu Wei-Lan (Tpe) 72-73, E. Estrera 69-76, C. Yuan-chi (Tpe) 71-74, D. Zarate 72-73, S. Taylor (US) 72-73, A. Preswell (Aus) 71-74, A. Kang (US) 71-74, G. Rusnak (US) 71-74

Singh frolics in the wind, seizes RP Open lead

By Jong Arcano

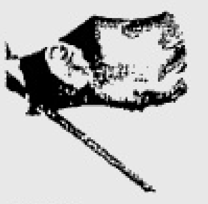
THE dreaded winds howled yesterday at Riviera and blew many big names out of the weekend play. When the punishing day was over, an Indian with a special liking for turbulence emerged the solo leader in the DHL-Philippine Open.

Jeev Milkha Singh, a familiar face who has played full-time on the European Tour, needed just an even-par round of 71 yesterday to bump Adam Groom of Australia off the top spot.

Singh, now based in Sydney, Australia, boosted his bid to become the first Indian winner of the $150,000 tourney serving as the fifth leg of the Asian Tour with a 139 aggregate, counting his opening 68 Thursday.

Groom's patience was tested to the hilt and he was lucky to have slipped just one spot to second place after a 75 on a day when no one among the 159 starters cracked par.

Singh's compatriot, Amandeep Johl, also matched par to stay in the hunt, joining Aussie Jonathan Cheetham in a tie for third at 141.



SINGH ROMY HOMILLADA

Filipinos Angelo Que and Antonio Lascuna moved into striking position, boosting local hopes of ending a five-year victory drought in the Asian Tour.

Que assembled his own 71 and Lascuna carded a 74 to join another Australian, David Gleeson (74), at 143.

After Frankie Miñoza, who stormed out of the event due to a spat with organizers over a slot he was asking for a Japanese friend, the local contingent lost two more top guns, Gerald Rosales and Cassius Casas.

Rosales, winner of the Open at the Langer course in 2001, scored a 76 for 151 while Casas had a 77 for a similar aggregate. Both missed the cut by one.

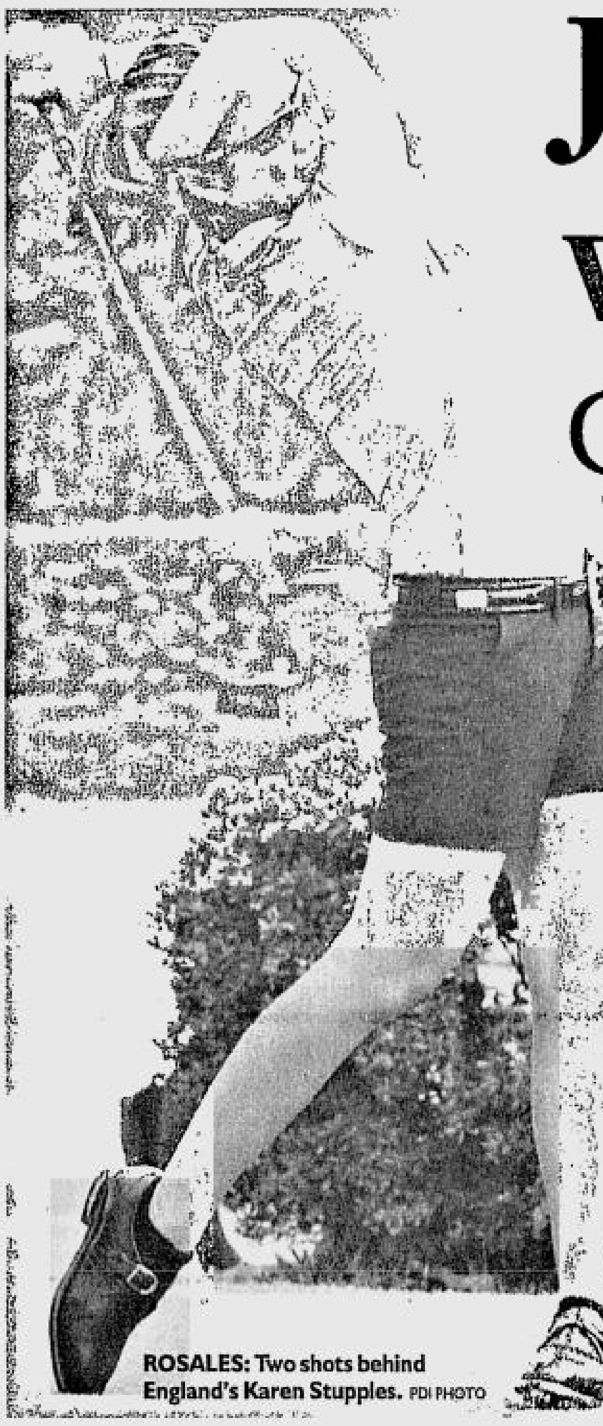
Another casualty was Carito Villaroman (76-151) who won a Mitsubishi Lancer worth P800,000 for hitting an ace on the fourth hole in the first round.

Among the foreign notables who will be going home early was Thai teen ace Prom Meesawat (79-151).

Fil-Am Ria Denise Quiazon, who just made history as the first woman to play in the Open, added an 86 to her 84 in the opening round for a 170 total.

"I liked the conditions today. I like playing in the wind, you have to hit a lot of different shots and I like playing like that," said Singh, who has posted 13 victories in a 10-year career.

Jenny moves up to 2nd with 65 in ANZ Masters



ROSALES: Two shots behind England's Karen Stupples. PDI PHOTO

GOLD COAST, Australia—Jennifer Rosales could have been back in her native Philippines this weekend, playing in the country's national men's golf championship at the invitation of tournament officials.

Instead, she decided to forsake the publicity and pressure of being yet another woman playing in a men's tournament and stick to her plans to play in the ANZ Ladies Masters in Australia.

On Friday, the 25-year-old former US collegiate champion from the University of Southern California vaulted to a share of second place with a 7-under 65 at Royal Pines that put her in contention for her first win as a professional.

Pacing the strong field was five-year campaigner and another non-winner, Karen Stupples of England. Stupples, competing in her first European tour event on a promoter's invitation, carded a 67 for a 36-hole 135 total, two up on Rosales (72-65) and Australian Anne Marie Knight (71-66).

After her seven-birdie round, Rosales said she was glad she didn't accept the invitation to play in the Philippine Open, a tournament her brother, Asian tour regular Gerald Rosales, won in 2000 with Jennifer as his caddie.

That would have put her in the same company as Annika Sorenstam and Laura Davies — who are both playing in the Royal Pines tournament — as women who have competed in men's events.

Sorenstam was at 139 following a 70 while Davies was at 140 after a 71.

"I was invited to play, but I'd rather be here," said Rosales. "I could have made history by playing, but there was too much going on, too much. I didn't want to start my year that way."

Rosales' best finish as a professional was a tie for second in last June's Giant Eagle event on the LPGA tour, where she shot a career-best 64 in the second round. Australian Rachel Teske won a three-hole playoff there that also included Sorenstam and Lorie Kane.

Teske, the first round leader with a 67, slipped to a 72 and was tied with Sorenstam.

Rosales won the NCAA title as a freshman in 1998 and was the five-time Philippine amateur champion. Her best finish in a major was a tie for fourth in the British Open in 2002.

Rosales says her first career win in her fifth year on tour could come at Royal Pines, where she finished tied for 16th last year.

Sodden greens due to heavy rain this week became more consistent Friday, enabling Rosales to pick up four birdies in five holes on the back nine.

"I hit every fairway and missed just one green—the 18th," said Rosales. "And I hit my longest putt of the day—from about 35 feet off the green—for birdie. *AP*

PAL INTERCLUB

Pueblo paces Founders; top seniors debut today

MANOLO FORTICH, Bukidnon—Host Pueblo de Oro took a two-point lead over Riviera in the Founders Division yesterday even as two of the biggest names in the Philippine Airlines Interclub golf championship make their debut in the seniors division today.

Exploiting their familiarity of their home course in Cagayan de Oro City, the Pueblo golfers amassed 240 points to move ahead of Riviera, whose 238 included a day-best 53 points by retired Commodore Danny Pizarro on a one-over-par 73 medal round.

Camp Evangelista took the temporary Friendship Division lead with 221 points as heavy downpour stopped play with two flights still out on the Del Monte Golf and Country Club course here.

It is at Del Monte where Francis Gaston and Tommy Manotoc renew their rivalry as top senior championship bets of Luisita and Wack Wack, respectively.

Gaston adds more sting to an already powerhouse Luisita squad bidding to clinch a record fifth straight title in the 36-hole event stretched over three days.

While Manotoc's senior squad may not contend for the title, his Canlubang team in the men's division is also a cinch to capture a similar record-setting fifth straight championship.

Like Tommy, Francis is expected to play in the men's tournament scheduled March 3-6.

"With Gaston in, we have a very strong team," said skipper Rudy Samson of the Luisita team that also boasts Iggy Clavecilla, Bong de Guzman, Richie Garcia, Alex Montelibano, King Sumulong and Lucio Yan.

Also slated today at both Del Monte and Pueblo de Oro are the team and individual contests in the Sportswriters division.

A record 560 players from 70 teams from here and abroad are playing in the event sponsored by ABS-CBN Global, Airbus Industrie, CNN International, GE Aircraft Engines, Golden Nugget Hotel Las Vegas, Johnnie Walker, Manila Broadcasting Corp., Radio Mindanao Network, Royal Carribean International and UMBN.

The corporate backers are Joey 92.3, 96.3 Wrock, PLDT and 105.1 Crossover while Asia Brewery Inc., Boeing, Boysen Pacific Paint, Century Park Hotel, INQ7.net, Jam 88.3, Tanduay Rhum and www.philstar.com are the other supporters.

For the first time in 18 years, the major raffle prize will be a package tour for two with a four-night stay at the Golden Nugget Hotel on Las Vegas worth $12,000.

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Marquez won't fight Pacquiao unless he gets the right purse

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

MANNY Pacquiao returned yesterday morning flashing a million-dollar smile, but WBA/IBF featherweight champ Juan Manuel Marquez, the Mexican Pacquiao is fancied to meet in May, stressed there won't be a title fight if he doesn't get the purse he wants.

Marquez, speaking through manager-trainer Nacho Beristain, said that if the offer sheet is not revised into a more acceptable one, he might as well find another fight.

Marquez is reportedly being offered $350,000 to battle Pacquiao in an HBO-televised fight on May 22, while Pacquiao will get no less than $1 million.

"Up to now we have not accepted anything. We want other conditions," Marquez said.

"I will not let them push my fighter around," said Beristain in an interview Friday. "When you notice that someone has lied to you, one doesn't stay easily satisfied."

Beristain, who once managed the careers of Mexican legends Julio Cesar Chavez and Ricardo Lopez, also indicated he wanted "more respect and better treatment" for Marquez.

"Juan Manuel has spent more time fighting in the featherweight division. He is a double champion, and also has a strong following in the United States where there are millions of Mexicans," Beristain said.

"Mexicans want to see another Mexican fighter take revenge on Manny Pacquiao for the beating that he gave Marco Antonio Barrera. All that added together should equal better treatment for my fighter in terms of economics."

Pacquiao flew back to Manila looking fulfilled as he stepped down from PAL flight PR 105 from San Francisco at 6:40 a.m.

Pacquiao and business manager Rod Nazario were coming off a meeting with HBO officials and promoter Murad Muhammad that sealed an agreement to make Pacquiao the next pay-per-view superstar starting with his May 22 fight.

Meanwhile, World Boxing Council super-bantamweight champ Oscar "Chololo" Larios (50-3-1, 35 KOs) from Guadalajara, Mexico, expressed eagerness to step into the shoes of Marquez.

However, Larios must first make a successful defense of his title in a rematch against Japanese Shigeru Nakazato in Saitama, Japan on March 6.

With a report from Rey Danseco

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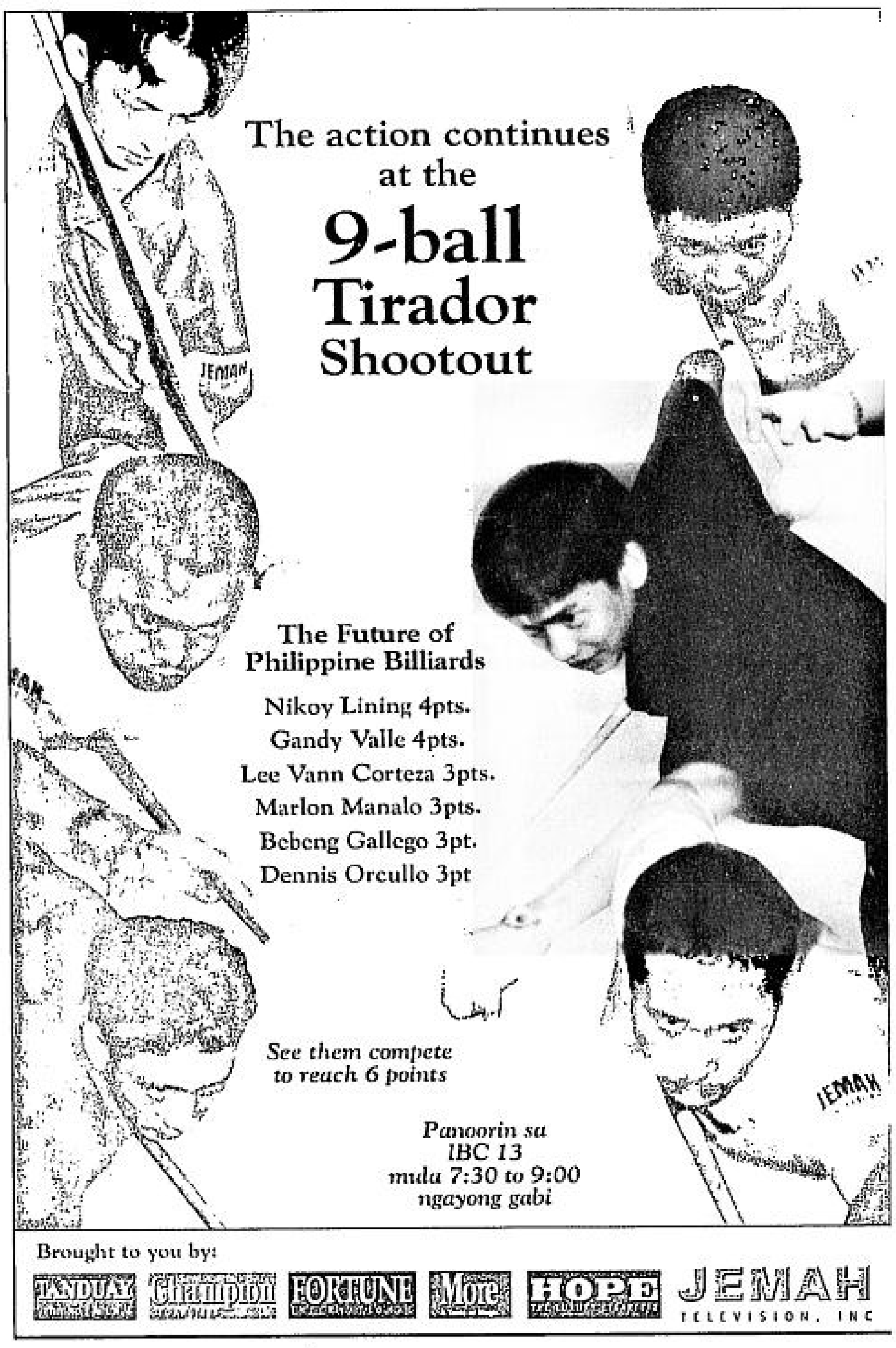
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Realtors face Aces today

THE ROOKIES will again take the spotlight from the imports as four more teams open their bid in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Philsports Arena today.

Alaska, which enlisted three freshmen to beef up its frontline, goes up against Sta. Lucia Realty in the curtain-raiser at 4 p.m. before San Miguel Beer and FedEx meet in the 6:15 p.m. main game.

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports)*
4 p.m.—Alaska vs Sta. Lucia
6:15 p.m.—FedEx vs San Miguel

Rookies Joachim Thoss, Willy Wilson and Bernzon Franco are expected to strengthen the Aces' resolve inside the paint to make up for the limping Alaska backcourt due to injuries sustained by John Arigo and Brandon Lee Cablay.

Cablay felt pain in his legs but is expected to suit up and join Mike Cortez, Rob Duat, Ali Peek, Don Allado, Stephen Padilla and 6-foot-4 import Galen Young.

Due to their tight salary cap, the Realtors signed up rookies Nelbert Omolon and Ronald Cuan to minimum contracts.

Lamayn Wilson, a 6-6 former Troy State University standout, will boost the Realtors' frontline.

In the other game, the Express will parade the bullstrong Alvin Jefferson along with rookies Marc Pingris, Ranidel de Ocampo and Wesley Gonzales.

Meanwhile, Red Bull Barako yesterday signed up import Bingo Merriex, replacing Carlos Wheeler, after the Barakos lost to the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals on Wednesday.

The 6-foot-6 Merriex was supposed to play for the Barangay Ginebra Kings but failed to arrive before the opening of the Fiesta Conference.

Jefferson, the tallest among the imports at 6-7-3/8, shattered the backboard of the Araneta Coliseum goal after a dunk during a pre-season game against the Aces. *June Navarro*

Nature changes course

RIVIERA is in such good shape that practically the entire field that teed off for the DHL 88th Philippine Open on Thursday had nothing but praises for this jewel of a course down Silang, Cavite.

"Seems like this course has been closed six months to prepare it for the Philippine Open," said one participant. "Now you are telling me Riviera stepped in for the Philippine Open only in two weeks' time?"

Amazing, but true.

This is not flattery for, as one Shakespeare character said, "Flattery will get you nowhere." But frankly, Riviera's two courses—Couples and Langer—are really the envy of many golf courses around the archipelago. They are so well-manicured and well-maintained that even the US Masters, the symbol of golf perfection, would find either of the two Riviera courses a perfect venue even in the harshest of summer time.

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

Here's a glass to Comm. Danny Pizarro (ret.), president of the Riviera Golf Club. So confident is Pizarro of the abilities of his staff that he could leave his chores as Tournament chairman of the DHL Open to lead the Riviera Team to the PAL Seniors Interclub now ongoing in Cagayan de Oro City. Why, even Riviera's new general manager, Buddy Resurreccion, can also afford to absent himself from the Open and fulfill a commitment to officiate in the PAL Interclub.

Langer is actually presently hogging the limelight as it is hosting the Philippine Open for the second time in four years, and Riviera's third in six years. The par-71 course, host of the 2000 Open and designed by former US Masters champion Bernhard Langer, is concededly more challenging than Couples (venue of 1998 RP Open). Tight and long, Langer is also undulating and its howling winds are perennial obstacles to good scores.

Yesterday saw nature change its course—to the detriment of half of the participating field.

"Is this normal?" asked Kamarul Zaman Din of the Asian Golf Tour. "Do the winds also usually come in the morning?"

Not really. But yesterday, Langer's dreaded killer winds blew unexpectedly as early as the break of dawn.

"Will the rains come, too? Gosh, these winds are horrible," said Kamarul, the chief rules official of the Asian Golf Tour. His round, black eyes couldn't believe what was happening: towering coconut trees shaking like *talahib* grasses from hissing winds blowing from all directions. If not for the bright sunshine, you'd think a super typhoon was battering the course.

Woe to the 79 players who teed off yesterday morning. They had the same windy conditions the day before when they teed off in the afternoon. Their chance to shoot good scores got blown away.

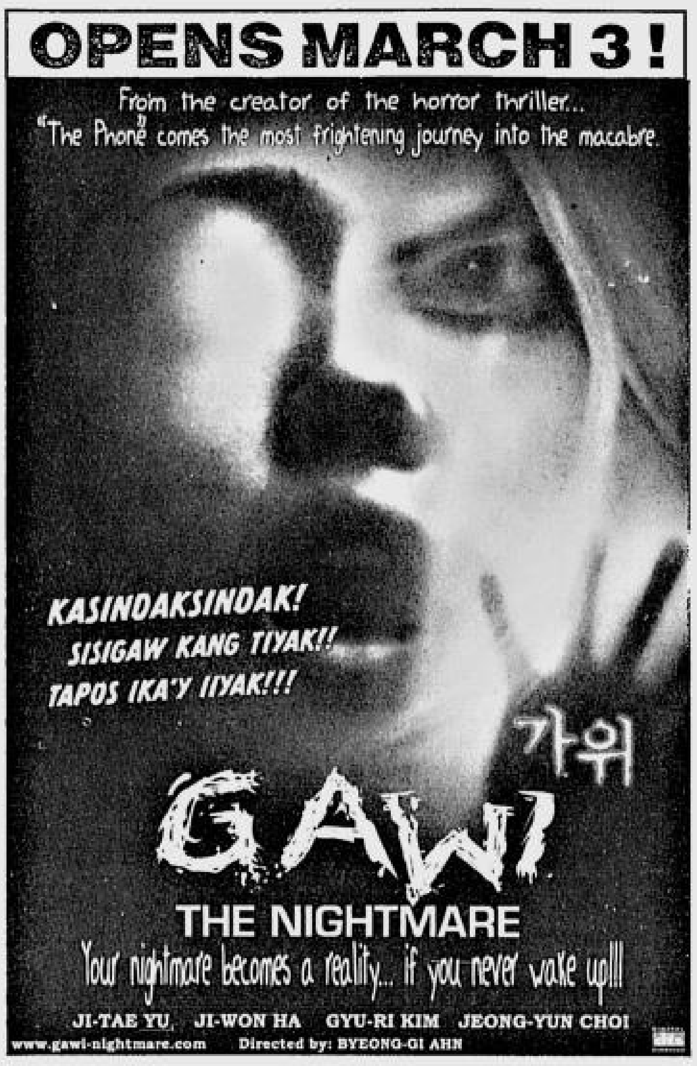
Luck came somewhat to the 79 other players who teed off in the second half of the 158-strong field from 18 countries. They played without Langer's cruel winds when they set out for battle early Thursday morning. As a result, 27 of them matched par or better, 14 of them shooting under par. Edwin Estrera and Tony Lascuna were the best-placed Filipinos with 69s, 4 shots behind Australian leader Adam Groom, whose 65 became a course record.

Winds that blew in the morning yesterday was a most unusual occurrence as the winds at Langer would usually start blowing in the afternoon. In golf, nature always plays a major factor. You simply can't play the winds all the time. But the winds can play games with you, nay, most of the time.

Another proof that golf is one of the hardest games to play.

***

FASTBREAK. Aside from Kamarul, a Malaysian with Hispanic looks, three others from the Asian Tour are here helping the NGAP run the DHL Open—Malaysians Kala and Zul and Thai Wanchai. As usual, Insan Taby Tabaniag is chief referee, with Toots Aquino, Tony Sisante, Valentin Dakuykoy and Jake Ayson among his able lieutenants. Of course, Pizarro's men and women at Riviera are of tremendous help as usual: Zaldy Legaspi, Henry Arabelo, Col. Ely Buluran, Eric Gozo, Andrew Ong, Lea Cortez, Sunshine Desacada, Jonalyn Peji, Myra de las Alas, Zheree Tee, Kathleen Reyes, Reggie Villeta, Jane Velasco, Ellen Acosta, Bert Famadico, Engel Rabe, Romel Aure, Ariel Alegre and Olin Velasco.



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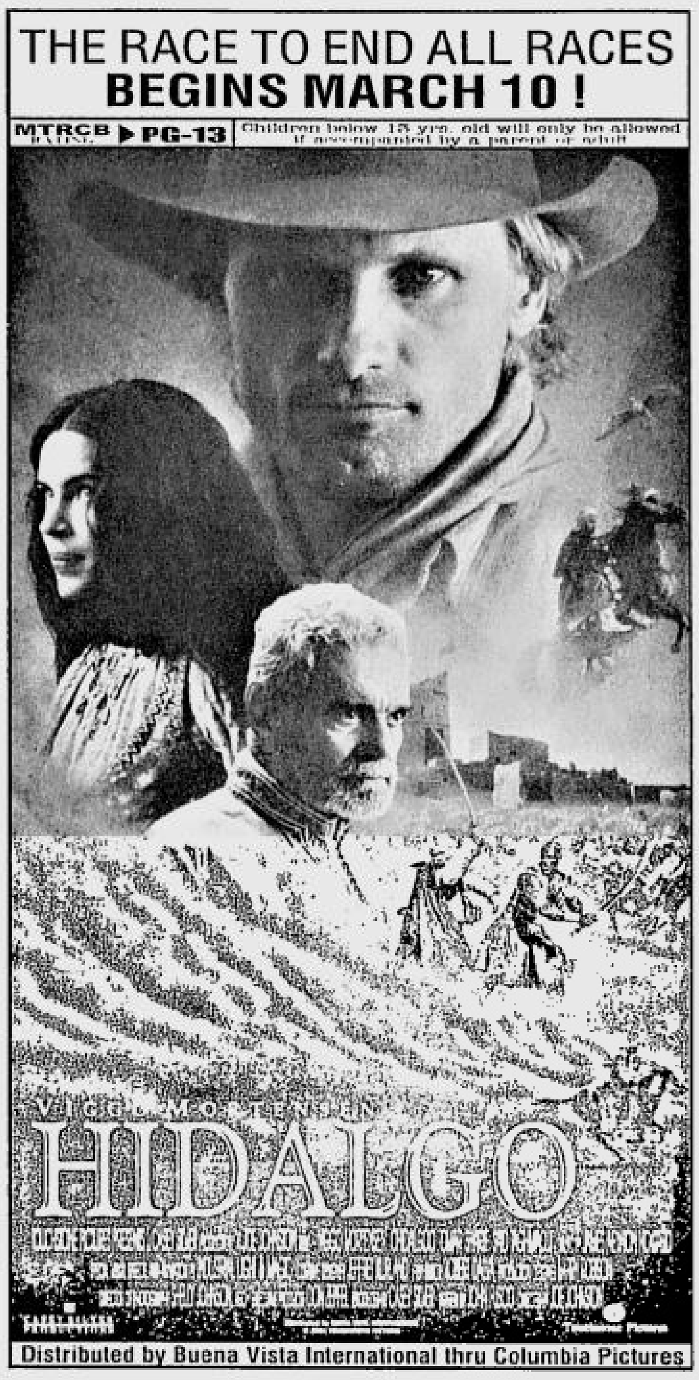

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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) DUPLEX
2 (DOLBY) SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
3 (DOLBY) RUN AWAY JURY
4 (DOLBY) MILAN

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274
1 U BELT
2 COLD MOUNTAIN
3 MILAN

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 MILAN
2 SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
21 GRUMS
3 COLD MOUNTAIN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) U BELT
5

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 WATER DEMON
2 U BELT
3 KUYA
4 MILAN
5 HAUNTED MANSION
6 SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 CHASING LIBERTY
2 U BELT

PREMIERE CINEMA
(Makati City) tel 892.2503
LUCASFILM THX

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 MONA LISA SMILE
2 MILAN

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376
1 U BELT
2
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
5 RESERVE
6
7 (DTS)
8 (SDDS)
9 (DOLBY)

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 U BET
2 KUYA
3 MILAN
4 (SDDS) RUN AWAY JURY
5 DUPLEX
6 (DOLBY) WATER DEMON
7 (DTS) GHOST HOUSE
8 COLD MOUNTAIN
9 21 GRUMS

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083
1 RESERVE
2 (SDDS)
3 (DTS)
4 (DOLBY)
5

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 NEW BLOOD
2 MILAN
3 (DTS) WE WHERE SOLDIER
4 U BET
5 ACCIDENTAL SPY

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson U BELT
Lords U BELT

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 U BELT
2 SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
3 WATER DEMON
4 RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) WATER DEMON
2 GHOST HOUSE
3 U BET
4 RESERVE
5 MILAN

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 U BELT
2 WISHING STAIRS

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
MALL CINEPLEX 7
Tel No. 911-3101 Loc. 821-8242-8400
1 U BELT
2 MILAN
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
4 (SDDS) COLD MOUNTAIN
5 (DTS) DUPLEX
6 KUYA
7 WATER DEMON

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) CHASING LIBERTY
2 MILAN
3 (DTS ES) KUYA
4 TEXAS SHAINSAW MASSACRE

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 MILAN
2 KUYA
3 (DOLBY) DIABLO
4 (DTS) MONA LIZA

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 MILAN
2 KUYA
3 (DOLBY) HAUNTED OFFICE
4 (DTS) MONA LIZA

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926
1 KUYA
2 U BELT
3 (DTS) MILAN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 MILAN
2 (DTS) KUYA
3 (DOLBY) RUN AWAY JURY
4 A TALE OF TWO SISTER

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 MILAN
2 (DOLBY) HAUNTED OFFICE
3 (D'S) RUN AWAY JURY
4 KUYA

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 MILAN
2 KUYA
3 (DOLBY) MONA LIZA SMILE

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 MILAN
2 HAUNTED MANSION
3 (DOLBY) A TALE OF TWO SISTERSS
4 (D'S) I AM DINA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320
1 A TALE OF TWO SISTERSS
2 MILAN
3 KUYA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) SABIK
2 UNDERWORLD
3 INTERNET QUEEN
4 (DTS) U BELT

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) RUN AWAY JURY
2 MAGIC KITCHEN
3 (DTS) MILAN
4 THE GATHERING
5 KUYA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 U BELT
2 GOOD LAWYERS WIFE

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 KUYA
2 MILAN
3 RUN AWAY JURY

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 HAUNTED MANSION
2 THE GRUDGE 1
3 (DTS) LAST SAMURAI
4 (DOLBY) MILAN

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914
1 (DTS) RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MILAN
2 RUN AWAY JURY
3 HAUNTED MANSION
4 KUYA

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 LAST SAMURAI
2 MILAN

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72
Schedule subject to change without prior notice

julia roberts
mona lisa smile

NOW SHOWING

Football sure to make it in SEAG

By Marc Reyes

THEY wanted football, shooting, badminton and volleyball.

The four sports were among the eight disciplines preferred by 10 other Southeast Asian Games member-countries to complete the 2005 SEAG roster of events during a caucus recently.

Also favored for inclusion were sepak takraw, pencak silat, table tennis and canoe-kayak, according to Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit, who arrived Thursday from an important International Olympic Committee meeting in Athens also attended by SEAG delegates.

The POC had earlier approved an initial list of 22 sports for the 2005 SEAG while allowing other NOCs to recommend eight more to complete the slots.

The 22 sports given preference by the POC were athletics, aquatics, arnis, archery, wrestling, wushu, boxing, basketball, rowing/traditional boat race, triathlon, gymnastics, judo, fencing, taekwondo, golf, chess, bowling, baseball, softball, equestrian, dancesport and billiards.

Officials believe RP has strong chances of winning golds in most of those sports.

Heritage field targets race record

THE QUICKEST among the 408-strong field will be gunning to beat the course record set last year when the fourth Pasig River Heritage Marathon fires off at 4:30 a.m. tomorrow in front of the Manila Cathedral in Intramuros. Crisanto Canillo of the Philippine Navy clocked 2 hours 30 minutes and 25 seconds in besting 283 other runners last year. But he won't be around to defend his title this time. Among the favorites this year are national pool member Roy Vence and Ronald Despi. Daisy Castillon, last year's runner-up, is the woman to watch. Last year's winner Liza Yambao is also unable to defend her crown. The event is organized by the Clean & Green Foundation Inc. and being held to support the government's program to rehabilitate the Pasig River through the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC). It is supported by Colgate-Palmolive Phils., the Herma Group of Companies, Unilever Philippines, DuPont Philippines, SM Foundation, Purefoods Hotdogs, Avia Shoes, Philippine Plastic Industries Association, Polystrene Packaging Council of the Philippines, Fibisco Biscuits, Splash Foundation and Spyder Sunglasses.

Kids karting clinic today

ALL is set for the Second Tuason Racing School (TRS)-Philippine International Karting Association (PIKA) Kids Karting Clinic powered by Ford, presented by Addict Mobile and co-presented by Standard Insurance, today from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Speedzone in Fort Bonifacio Global City. The clinic is for kids aged from eight to 14 years. Registration fee is P500, which will cover the use of the kart, suit, helmet, lunch and snacks. For inquiries, call (632)531-2962.

SSC pair leads Nestea beach volley winners

SAN SEBASTIAN'S Arman Canilang and Jershon del Rosario fought off the intense noonday sun and torrid opposition from Sherwin Meneses and Limuel Gatchalian of Adamson to prevail, 21-19, yesterday in the Nestea Beach Volleyball 2004 at the Rockwell Center.

Other results: Men—St. Benilde d. Bulacan State University, 21-5; CCP d. Baguio College Foundation, 25-23; UP d. SSC Cavite, 21-10; DLSU d. UPLB, 21-14; PATTS d. Ateneo de Naga, 21-14. Women—Letran d. PNU, 21-12; UB d. University of Asia Pacific, 21-15; PCU d. St. Louis, 21-6; St. Jude College d. BCF, 21-4; SSC Cavite d. Ateneo de Naga, 21-10; St. Benilde d. Emilio Aguinaldo College, 21-12; PSBA d. UP, 21-13; Adamson d. Lyceum, 21-7.

Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	UBELT
Ali 2	MILAN
Ali 3	SOMETHINGS GOTTA GIVE
Ali 4	COLD MOUNTAIN
Ali 5	DUPLEX
Ali 6	KUYA
Ali 7	WATER DEMON

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ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 29	PBA: TALK N' TEXT VS. SHELL
MAR 1	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 3	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 6	BB. PILIPINAS CORONATION NIGHT
MAR 7	PBA: STA LUCIA VS. COKE
MAR 10	PBA: REDBULL VS. SHELL
MAR 12	SONG BIRD & SONG WRITER REPEAT

FOR TICKETS, CALL TICKETNET AT 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	U-BELT
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	U-BELT
B	BURLESK KING
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KUYA
CINEMA-2	U-BELT
CINEMA-3	MYSTIC RIVER (R)
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HAUNTED MANSION
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-6	CHASING LIBERTY
CINEMA-7	WISHING STAIRS
CINEMA-8	GUSTO KO SA LALAKI (R)
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DUPLEX
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-12	WATER DEMON
CINEMA-14	GHOST HOUSE
CINEMA-15	MILAN

LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	MILAN
CINEMA-1	HAUNTED MANSION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-4	CLOSED

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINATIONS
4
BEST PICTURE
BEST DIRECTOR
BEST SCREENPLAY
BEST ACTOR

8 BRITISH ACADEMY OF FILM AND TELEVISION ARTS AWARD NOMINATIONS
WINNER
BEST ACTOR BEST ACTRESS BEST EDITING

WINNER
BEST PICTURE
Best Actor Best Screenplay
2004 Golden Globes

WINNER
Film of the Year
2003 National Board of Review

WINNER
Best Actor
Best Original Screenplay
2003 Online Film Critics Society

WINNER
Best Director
Best Actor
2003 New York Film Critics Circle

WINNER
BEST PICTURE
BEST ACTOR
2003 San Francisco Film Critics Circle

WINNER
Best Actor
2003 Los Angeles Film Critics Association

WINNER
Best Director
Best Actor
Best Actress
2003 Boston Society of Film Critics

WINNER
Best Film
Best Screenplay
Best Actor
2003 Toronto Film Critics Association

WINNER
Best Actor
2003 National Society of Film Critics

WINNER
Best Picture
Best Director
Best Actor
Best Support Actress
2003 NY Film Critics Online

Everyone wants to be found.
A film by Sofia Coppola
Scarlett Johansson
Bill Murray
Lost In Translation

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1
COLD MOUNTAIN
12:05, 3:20, 6:30, 9:40
R18

CINEMA 2
SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
R13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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MUSIC MUSEUM

MAR 5,6,12,13	"MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL"	8:00PM
MAR 17 & 18	"WILLIE NEP 4 PRESIDENT"	9:00PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972
RESERVED SEATING
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	DUPLEX	10:55, 1:05, 3:15 5:25, 7:35, 9:45	PG-13
2	SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE	11:30, 2:20, 5:10, 8:00, 10:50	R-13
3	RUNAWAY JURY	11:50, 2:20, 4:50 7:20, 9:50	R-13
4	MILAN	11:45, 2:15, 4:45 7:15, 9:45	PG 13

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

RUNAWAY JURY R13 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:25	DUPLEX PG13 11:50, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00	HAUNTED MANSION GP 1:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
LOST IN TRANSLATION PG13 11:35, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:15, 10:20	COLD MOUNTAIN R18 12:25, 3:30, 6:35, 9:40	SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE R13 12:00, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45, 10:25

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

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CINEMA 1 THX
HAUNTED MANSION 11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

2 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE 10:40, 1:25, 4:10, 6:55, 9:45
3 MILAN 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
4 COLD MOUNTAIN 10:20, 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00
5 DUPLEX 10:55, 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:35, 9:45
6 LOST IN TRANSLATION 12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:40, 9:00
7 U-BELT 11:50, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50
8 WATER DEMON 12:30, 2:35, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00
9 KUYA 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
10 RUNAWAY JURY 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA
526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

DOLBY DIGITAL EX

1 SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
2 COLD MOUNTAIN 10:10, 1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:50
3 MILAN 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50
4 GHOST HOUSE 11:35, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:10, 10:00
5 LOST IN TRANSLATION 11:35, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:10, 10:00
6 DUPLEX 10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:35, 10:00
7 WATER DEMON 10:40, 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:40

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST
682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1 DUPLEX 10:50, 12:50, 3:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
2 COLD MOUNTAIN 10:30, 12:15, 3:00, 5:45, 9:00
3 KUYA 11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 9:00
4 U-BELT 10:50, 12:20, 2:50, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00
5 WATER DEMON 11:35, 2:00, 4:25, 6:50, 9:15
6 SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE 10:20, 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
MILAN 10:35, 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 9:00
8 GHOST HOUSE 10:05, 1:20, 3:55, 6:30, 9:05

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW
935-3229 / 31

1 DUPLEX 11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
2 WATER DEMON 11:40, 1:45, 3:50, 5:55, 8:10
3 KUYA 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
4 U-BELT 11:40, 1:45, 3:50, 5:55, 8:10
5 MILAN 12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:30
6 COLD MOUNTAIN 11:30, 2:30, 5:30, 8:30
SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE 11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
8 GHOST HOUSE 11:55, 2:40, 5:25, 8:30

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575	big Supercenter CAINTA 240-4661	Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA Laguna (049)837-0907
1 WATER DEMON	1 DUPLEX	1 MILAN
2 MILAN	2 MILAN	2 HAUNTED OFFICE
3 KUYA	3 U-BELT	3 KUYA
4 U-BELT	4 GHOST HOUSE	4 U-BELT
		5 A GOOD LAWYER'S WIFE

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870	Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS 852-2125	Big R Supercenter STARMILLS San Fernando Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270
1 HAUNTED MANSION	1 KUYA	1 CHASING LIBERTY
2 KUYA	2 WISHING STAIRS	2 GOOD LAWYER'S WIFE
3 WISHING STAIRS	3 RUNAWAY JURY	3 KUYA
4 MILAN	4 COLD MOUNTAIN	4 MILAN
5 RUNAWAY JURY	5 MILAN	5 DUPLEX
		6 21 GRAMS

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858	BACOLOD 441-0458/59	ILOILO 336-8070/78
1 MILAN	1 DUPLEX	1 HAUNTED MANSION
2 U-BELT	2 HAUNTED MANSION	2 CHASING LIBERTY
3 DUPLEX	3 MILAN	3 MILAN
4 DTS SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE	4 CHASING LIBERTY	4 IN THE CUT
5 WATER DEMON	5 KUYA	5 KUYA
6 KUYA	6 THE GATHERING	6 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

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* TORQUE *
March 2, 2004 (TUESDAY)
8:00 PM

THE TORQUE RUSH
* A BODY PAINTING SHOW *
March 2, 2004 (TUESDAY)
7:00 PM An invitational Event

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From master storyteller Jim Sheridan ("My Left Foot," "In The Name of the Father") comes a deeply personal and emotionally raw tale of a family finding its soul *IN AMERICA*. Through the wide-open eyes of two young heroines, Sheridan transforms a devastating human tragedy into a riveting, humor-tinged story about memory, secrets, love, loss, coming together and starting over .

3 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

BEST ACTRESS
Samantha Morton

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
Djimon Hounsou

BEST SCREENPLAY
Jim Sheridan, Naomi Sheridan & Kirsten Sheridan

IN AMERICA

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)

OPENS MARCH 10 EXCLUSIVELY AT GLORIETTA 4 CINEMAS

AYALA CINEMAS

COLUMBIA PICTURES

Tommy Lee Jones Cate Blanchett

THE MISSING

How far would you go, how much would you sacrifice to get back what you have lost?

From Ron Howard and Brian Grazer, the Oscar-winning director-producer team of A BEAUTIFUL MIND comes THE MISSING, an action-filled suspense thriller and a powerful drama of love, forgiveness and redemption.

"Powerful and provocative, The Missing is another masterful production from one of the industry's best directors and two of its best actors."
-- Paul Clinton, CNN

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)

SECOND WEEK!

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-18 | Strictly For Adults Only
No one below 18 years old may be admitted.

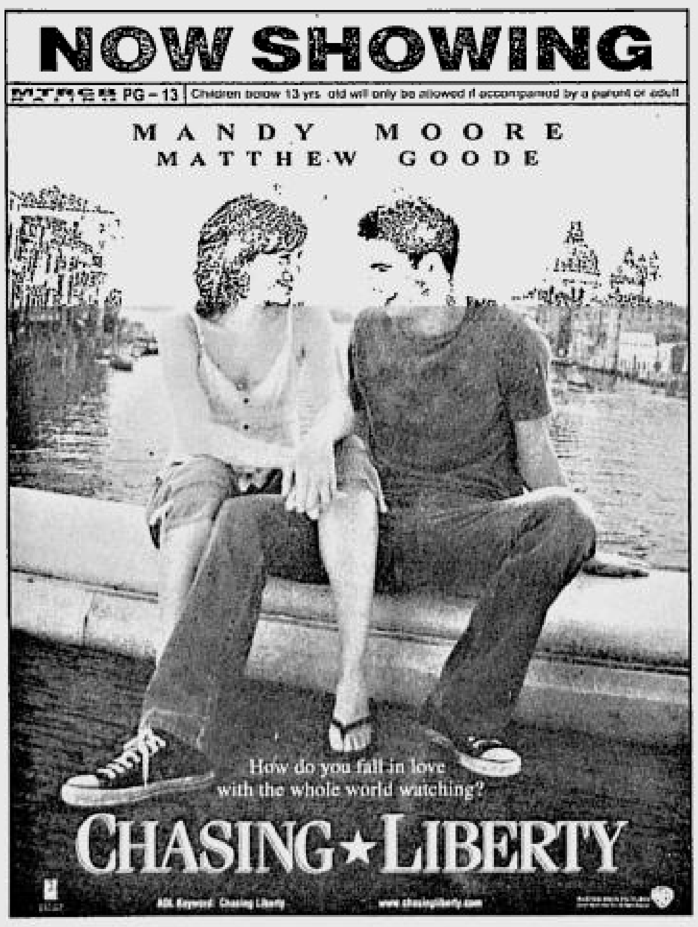
7 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

13 BRITISH ACADEMY FILM AWARD NOMINATIONS INCLUDING BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR

And the film David Denby of The New Yorker calls
"STUNNING ENTERTAINMENT!"

JUDE LAW NICOLE KIDMAN RENEE ZELLWEGER
COLD MOUNTAIN

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

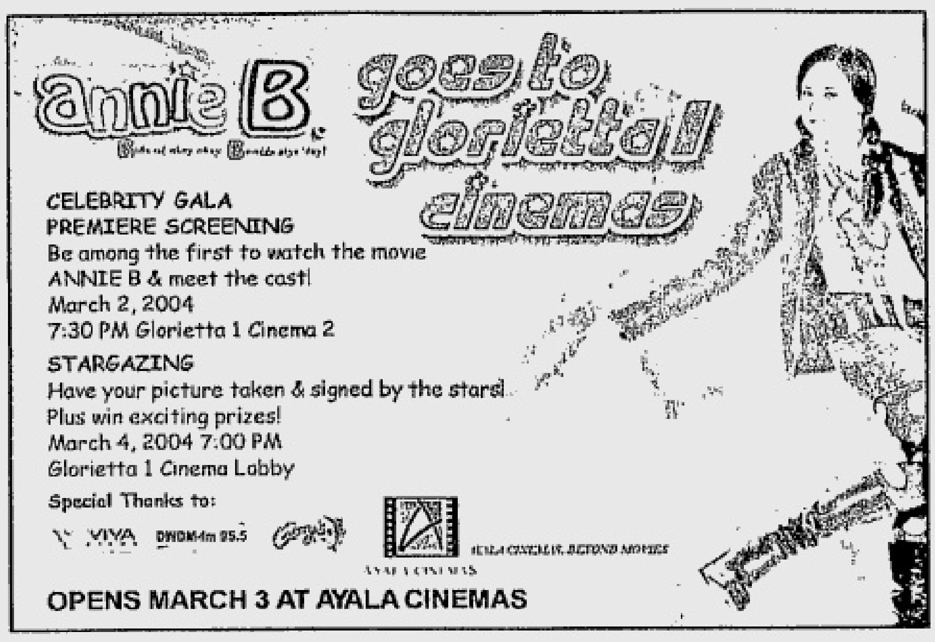


NOW SHOWING

MTRCB PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

MANDY MOORE
MATTHEW GOODE

How do you fall in love with the whole world watching?
CHASING ★ LIBERTY



annie B goes to glorietta! cinemas

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PREMIERE SCREENING
Be among the first to watch the movie
ANNIE B & meet the cast!
March 2, 2004
7:30 PM Glorietta 1 Cinema 2

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March 4, 2004 7:00 PM
Glorietta 1 Cinema Lobby

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AYALA CINEMAS. BEYOND MOVIES

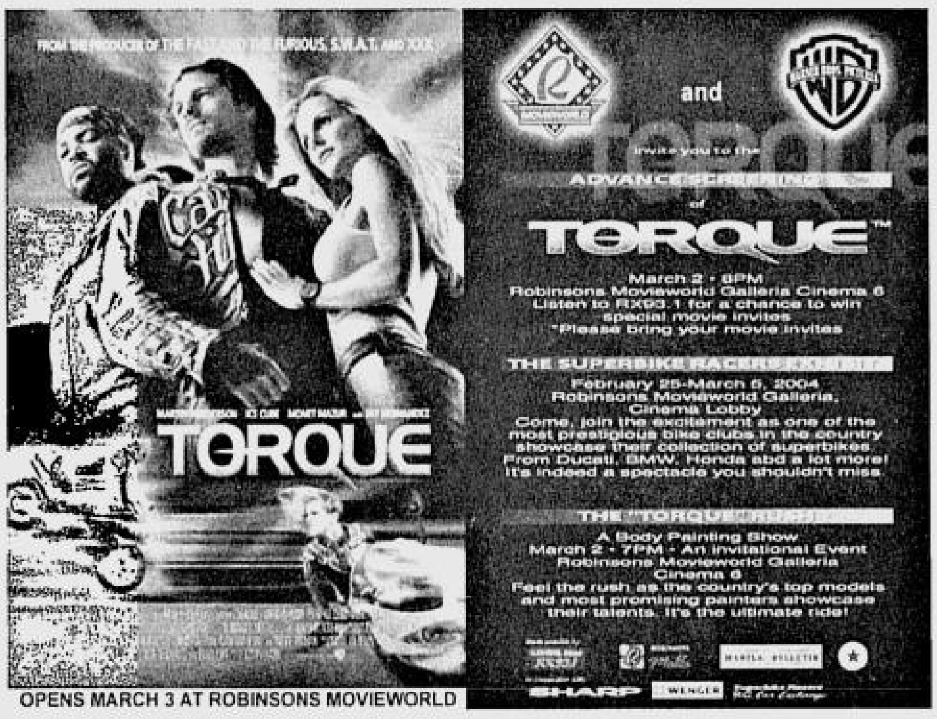
OPENS MARCH 3 AT AYALA CINEMAS

AYALA MALLS
Beauty and the Beast

AYALA CENTER
Feb. 20 - 5pm, 7pm
Feb. 21 - 11am, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm
Feb. 22 - 11am, 3pm, 5pm

ALABANG TOWN
Feb. 27 - 11am, 3pm, 6pm
Feb. 28 - 11am, 3pm, 6pm
Feb. 29 - 11am, 3pm, 6pm

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Mar. 5 - 4pm, 7:30pm
Mar. 6 - 11am, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm
Mar. 7 - 11:30am, 3pm, 6:30pm



FROM THE PRODUCER OF THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS, S.W.A.T. AND XXX
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March 2 - 8PM
Robinsons Movieworld Galleria Cinema 6
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THE SUPERBIKE RACERS

February 25-March 5, 2004
Robinsons Movieworld Galleria, Cinema Lobby
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THE "TORQUE" RUSH

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Feel the rush as the country's top models and most promising painters showcase their talents. It's the ultimate ride!

OPENS MARCH 3 AT ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

SM CINEMA

what to watch

Drama

LOST IN TRANSLATION

This is the story of two Americans, a washed-up TV star (Murray) in town for a TV whiskey commercial shoot, and the (very) young wife (Johansson) of a photographer, who meet in Tokyo, Japan and end up spending a weekend hanging out there together on a "soul-searching mission."

Oscar nominee for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Original Screenplay

now showing

DIAL 8339999 for screening schedules

up next

March 3	March 10	March 31	April 14
MTRCB Rating: R18	Subject to MTRCB Rating	Subject to MTRCB Rating	Subject to MTRCB Rating

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Roligon 4-cocker sizzles today

EXCITING cockfighting action starts early today at Roligon Mega Cockpit as the much-awaited Walang Iwanan 4-Cock Derby sizzles with more than 130 fights lined up. An interesting showdown between big-time and medium-scale cockers will be the event's main fare, according to Roligon owner and host Rolly Ligon. At stake is P440,000. Seeing action are Jeffrey Gonzaga, Boy Marzo, tabloid executive Rey Briones, Emitt San Juan of California, Iking Araneta, Blandy Tolentino, Pol Garde, Ronnie Nabong, Ansel Cordura, Mimi Itchon, Tos Reyes, Paeng Arciaga, Boy de los Reyes, Dax Ganzon, Yando Bayo, Bobby Yulo and Dick del Rosario, among others. For inquiries, call 833-2275, 833-1638, 852-9812 and 852-9774. Meanwhile, the Largahan 5-Cock Derby unfolds on March 4, 6 and 9. Entry fee is P8,800 and the guaranteed prize is P1.5 million.

Las Piñas derby lures big guns

COCKFIGHTING heavyweights clash in a showdown billed as Battle of the Heavyweights 7-Cock Derby at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum on Saturday next week. The one-day event has lured, among others, Patrick Antonio, lawyer Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza and William Co, Mayor Jessie Viceo, Sonny Lagon, businessman Gerry Ramos, Gov. Ito Ynares and former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Joey de los Santos, Alfie Sy, Eric de la Rosa of Pasay, Benjie Lim, Boy Royo, Pol Estrellado, Ric de Guzman, sportsman Matt Bitanga and Dicky Lim. Because of the staggering P330,000 entry fee, the participants are expected to field their winningest fighters, said Antonio. Proceeds of this event will be divided pro rata among the participants. Submission of weights is on March 5, from 2 p.m. For inquiries, call 873-1040.

Mangaldan cycling classic Sunday

TOP guns of Philippine cycling, led by 1996 Marlboro Tour king Victor Espiritu, will be competing in the 30th Mangaldan bikefest tomorrow in Mangaldan, Pangasinan. Dubbed the 2nd Mayor Tito B. Sarzaba Jr. Cycling Classic, the event is being held in conjunction with the celebration of Mangaldan's annual town fiesta. Aside from defending champion Espiritu, other notable entries are Elmo Ramos Jr., Ryan Tanguilig and Pangasinan standout Alfie Catalan. At stake is a cash pot of P35,000 plus trophies. The 189-kilometer race, which traverses the towns of San Jacinto, San Fabian and Mangaldan 10 times, fires off at 10:30 a.m. The event is under the auspices of the municipal government and is being supported by town administrator engineer Aureo Philip Fabia and friends.

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13

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THE BONE SNATCHER
Solar FILMS INC.

KOBE Bryant celebrates a twinner against Sacramento. REUTERS

Referee aided Lakers win; NBA admits error

NEW YORK—The NBA acknowledged Thursday there was an officiating mistake in the Los Angeles Lakers' 112-111 victory over the host Denver Nuggets.

With the Nuggets leading Wednesday night's game, 111-109, a shot by Denver's Andre Miller appeared to brush the rim and barely beat the shot clock. Teammate Carmelo Anthony got the rebound, but the whistle blew for a shot-clock violation. The officials ruled it was an inadvertent whistle, resulting in a jump ball.

The Lakers won the tip, leading to Kareem Rush's 3-pointer with 3.2 ticks left.

NBA official Stu Jackson said there shouldn't have been a whistle on the play.

In Thursday's NBA games, Michael Finley scored 30 points as Dallas rolled to a 115-91 victory over San Antonio, who lost Tim Duncan to a thigh injury, and Mike Bibby hit a pair of clutch 3-pointers in the final 90 seconds Thursday as Sacramento defeated their Pacific Division rivals, the Lakers, 103-101. *AP, AFP*

Matchplay 2nd round washed out

CARLSBAD, California—Rain washed out second-round matches here Thursday at the six million-dollar World Golf Matchplay Championship.

Unplayable conditions forced play to be postponed without a ball being hit. Torrential overnight rain left parts of the La Costa course unplayable, leaving officials with no choice but to postpone all 16 matches.

Play has been rescheduled to start Friday at 7 a.m. local time with the third round to be played in the afternoon.

The opening match on the schedule between Americans Davis Toms and Shaun Micheel was pushed back twice before being called off.

World No. 1 and defending champion Tiger Woods will meet South Africa's Trevor Immelman in another Bobby Jones bracket match.

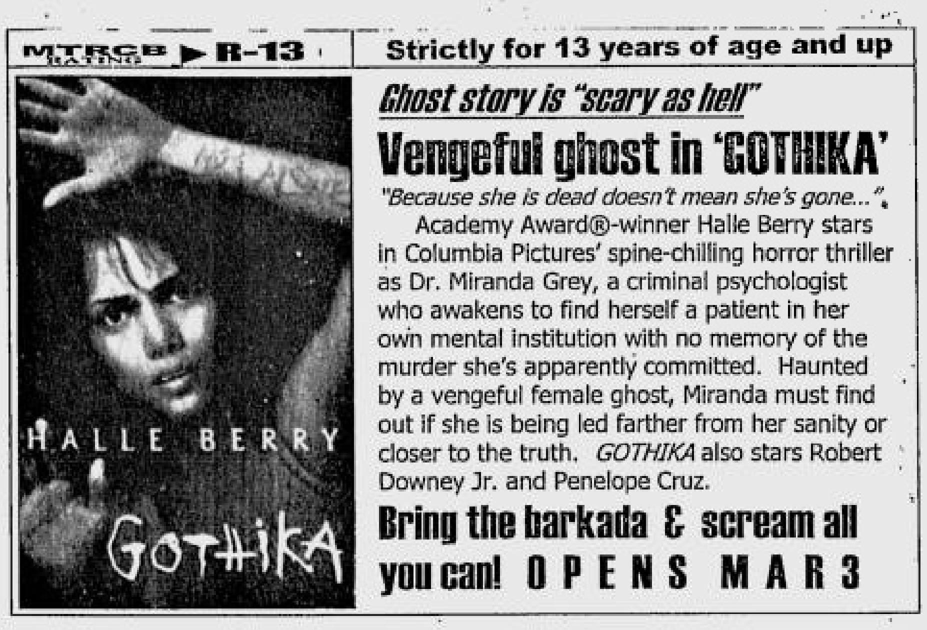
All three other top seeds also advanced to the second round.

Fiji's Vijay Singh will meet American Jerry Kelly in the Gary Player bracket while Davis Love faces fellow American Fred Couples in the Sam Snead bracket. Canada's Mike Weir plays Australian Stephan Leaney in the Ben Hogan bracket. *AFP*

1st Castrol Slalom fires off today

THE CLARET School Alumni Batch 1982 and Team Nitro will hold the 1st Castrol Slalom Invitational, a motorsport fund-raising event for the benefit of the batch's charity programs today at the parking lot of SM Fairview.

The event, sponsored by Castrol Philippines, features Slalom races for 18 classes. For inquiries, call 020-5860.



MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 Strictly for 13 years of age and up

Ghost story is "scary as hell"

Vengeful ghost in 'GOTHIKA'

"Because she is dead doesn't mean she's gone..."

Academy Award®-winner Halle Berry stars in Columbia Pictures' spine-chilling horror thriller as Dr. Miranda Grey, a criminal psychologist who awakens to find herself a patient in her own mental institution with no memory of the murder she's apparently committed. Haunted by a vengeful female ghost, Miranda must find out if she is being led farther from her sanity or closer to the truth. *GOTHIKA* also stars Robert Downey Jr. and Penelope Cruz.

Bring the barkada & scream all you can! OPENS MAR 3

HALLE BERRY
GOTHIKA

MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

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DIANE KEATON
BEST ACTRESS • COMEDY

ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINEE
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JACK NICHOLSON DIANE KEATON KEANU REEVES

WINNER
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Diane Keaton

"...I LOVED IT. DIANE KEATON, AN OSCAR® NOMINATION, SHE COULD GO ALL THE WAY. THE FILM IS THAT GOOD, IT IS THAT MUCH FUN."
Joel Siegel, GOOD MORNING AMERICA

"NICHOLSON IS HILARIOUS...'SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE' IS SOMETHING SPECIAL."
Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

"SHARP, WITTY, AND DEEP-DOWN FUNNY, 'SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE' IS ONE OF THE BEST ADULT ROMANTIC COMEDIES OF THE YEAR."
Paul Clinton, CNN

A FILM BY NANCY MEYERS
SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE

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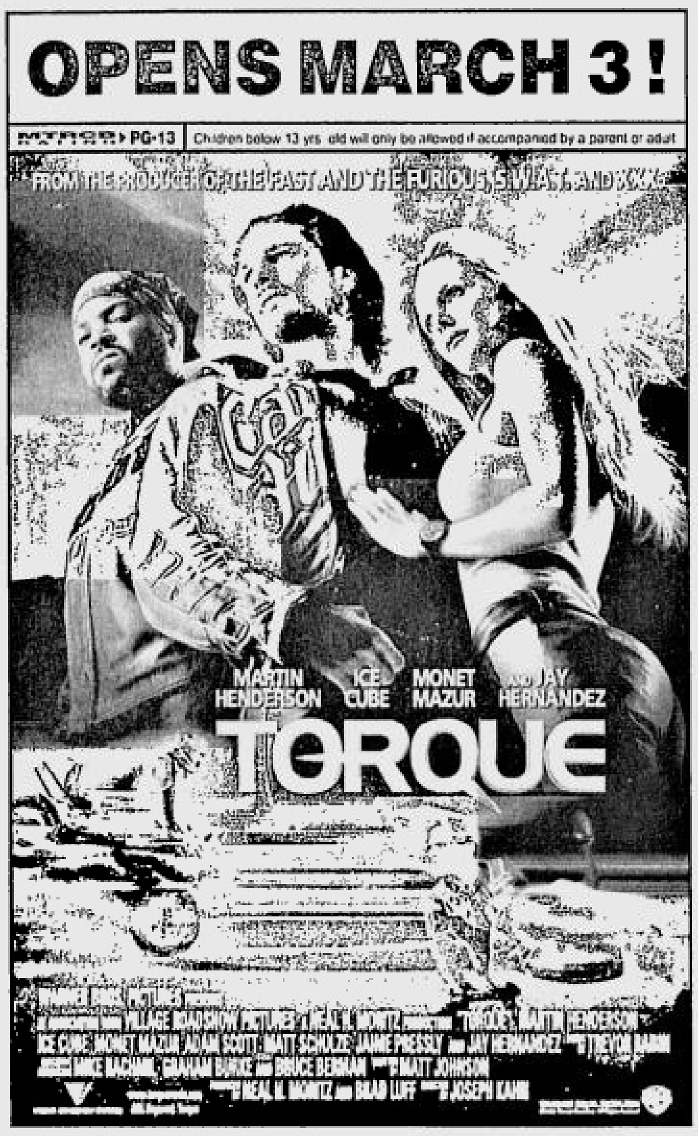
Very romantic. Very comedy.

From The Makers of Notting Hill



OPENS MARCH 3!

MTRCB PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

FROM THE PRODUCER OF THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS, S.W.A.T. AND XXX

MARTIN HENDERSON ICE CUBE MONET MAZUR AND JAY HERNANDEZ

TORQUE

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

OPENS MARCH 3

HANEP SA ACTION... WALANG CAMERA TRICKS.
LABANAN NG MGA MATATAPANG... KAKASA KA BA?

From YUEN WO-PING
the action director of THE MATRIX.

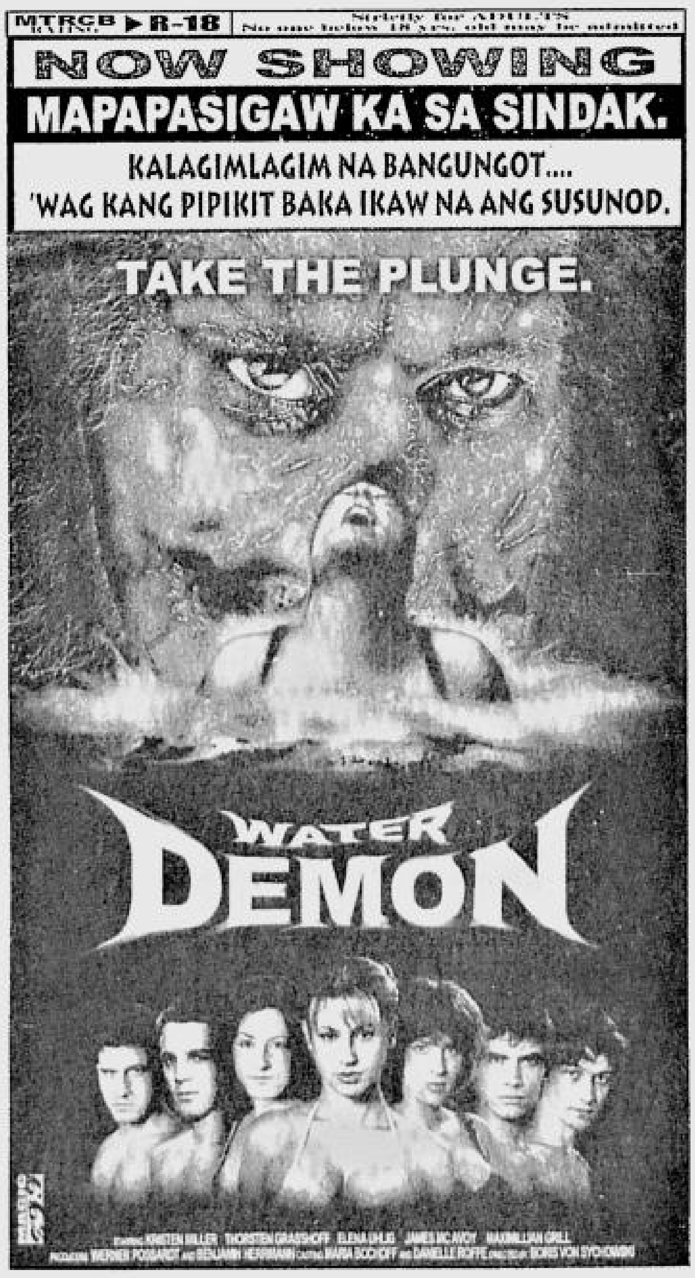
SHAOLIN KUNG FU ORIGINATED IN 3RD CENTURY CHINA. ★ NINJITSU ORIGINATED IN 9TH CENTURY JAPAN.

WHICH TECHNIQUE IS THE BEST?

CHINA'S NATIONAL WU-SHU CHAMPION
SHI-XIAO-LONG

4-TIME JAPAN NINJITSU CHAMPION
KEN WONG

DRAGON VERSUS NINJA



MTRCB RATING ▶ R-18 Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. old may be admitted

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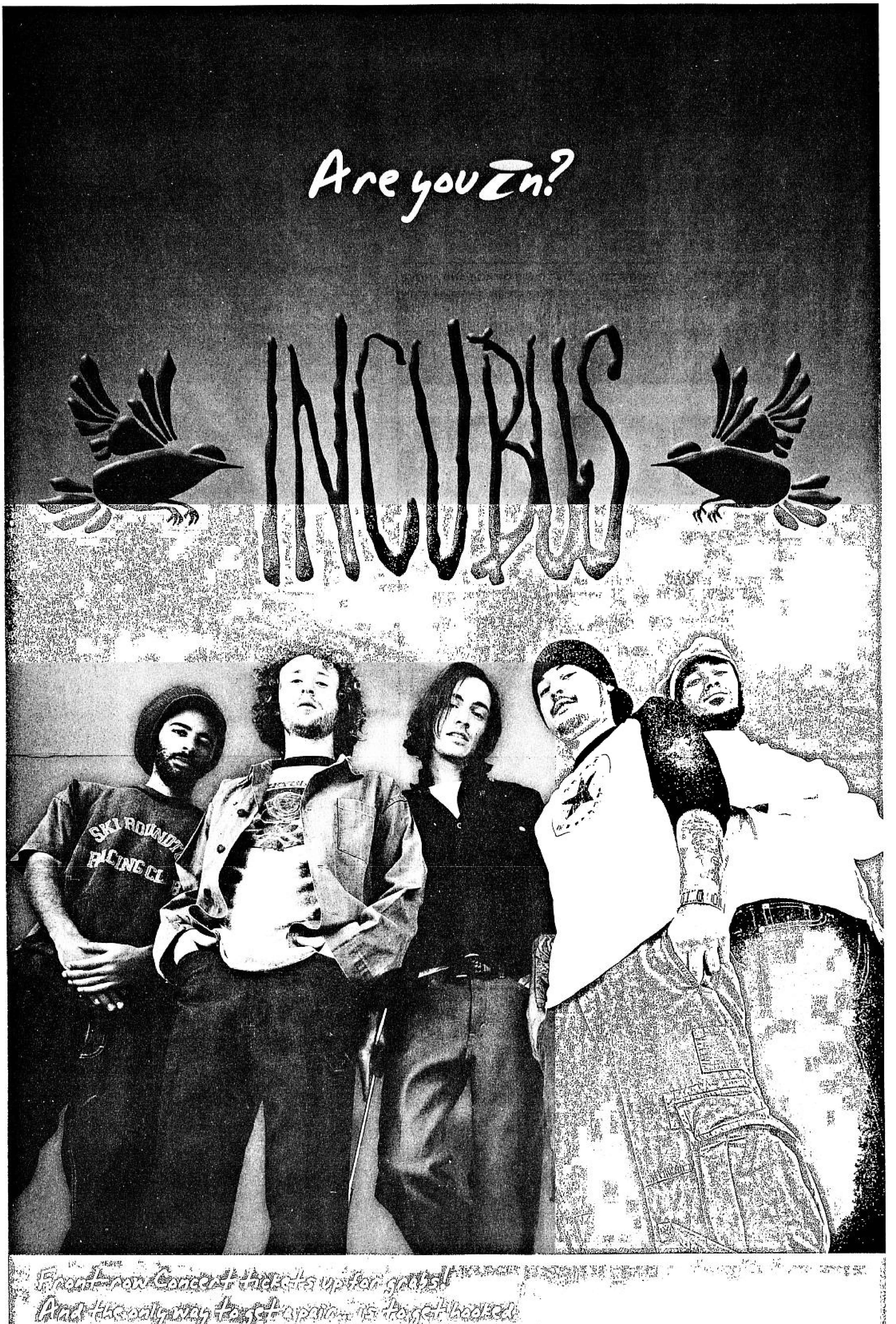
WATER DEMON



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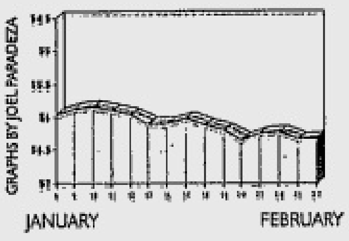
LOW SULFUR

Customs exceeds 2-month collection goal

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

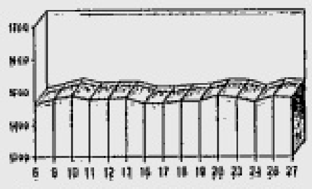
P 56.335 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 27, 2004

Y 109.08 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 27, 2004

GOLD: $393.30-393.80
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb.27, 2004

Shares close lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B10)

SHARE prices closed 0.19 percent lower yesterday on continuing political uncertainty and the weakness of the local currency, dealers said.

Two separate opinion polls gave conflicting results while investors are awaiting the Supreme Court's ruling on whether or not opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr. should be barred from taking part in the May presidential elections on citizenship grounds.

Against this backdrop, the peso fell steadily against the dollar.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 2.79 points to 1,483.18 after trading between 1,481.08 and 1,489.94. Losers beat gainers 26 to 16, while 48 stocks were unchanged.

Volume rose to 121.8 million shares worth P582.8 million from 115.7 million shares worth P579.2 million on Thursday.

The all-shares index was up 0.09 at 941.58 but the commercial-industrial index fell 4.49 to 2,313.68. Property dropped 1.18 to 530.60 while the mining and oil sectors were unchanged at 1,526.13 and 1.27, respectively. Banking and financial services shed 1.09 to 432.97.

"The market can't decide for now where to go given the political uncertainty and the lack of convincing leads. The weak peso is another reason to stay on the sidelines," said Ron Rodrigo of Accord Capital Equities Inc.

The business community has been apprehensive over the candidacy of FPJ in the May 10 elections as he lacks a formal education and has no experience in government.

A petition is pending with the Supreme Court to have him disqualified on grounds he may not be a natural-born Filipino citizen but his followers have threatened civil unrest if he is disqualified.

Security concerns took center stage in the market following Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita's comments Thursday that unidentified groups were trying to recruit military officers to join a destabilization plot against President Macapagal-Arroyo. Ermita said the groups plan to strike if the Supreme Court decides in favor of a pending disqualification bid against opposition front-runner Poe Jr. *AFP, AP*

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Customs yesterday reported that its preliminary revenue collection for February surpassed by 19.5 percent its target for the month.

The BOC said revenue collection as of Feb. 23 stood at P7.09 billion, or higher than the P5.93-billion goal for the full month. The preliminary figure is also higher than the P6.82 billion recorded in February 2003.

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said the BOC might be headed for another year of improved collections as initially shown by its performance for the first two months of the year.

Last January, the BOC collected P9.5 billion, or 12.6 percent higher than its P8.5-billion target. The collection, however, was slightly lower than the P9.62 billion recorded during the same month last year.

"The figures (for the first two months of the year) are encouraging, considering that January and February used to be slow months for the BOC," he said in an interview.

Bernardo attributed the higher collection for February to the movement in the peso-dollar exchange rate and intensified monitoring of collection by the BOC's district offices nationwide.

For 2004, the BOC is tasked to collect P110.58 billion for the government. The BOC, which is the second-highest revenue contributor following the Bureau of Internal Revenue, is hard-pressed to meet its collection target to help ease the country's budget deficit.

Last year, the BOC collected P106.06 billion, surpassing its full-year target for the first time in years.

Bernardo said the BOC has begun re-engineering its operations to improve collection. In particular, he said, the BOC has intensified its computerization program to include more district offices and streamlined operations to reduce chances of corruption.

For its part, the BIR likewise surpassed its P424-billion collection target for the year. BIR collection for 2003 stood at 425.3 billion.

With the combined collection of the BOC, the BIR and other revenue sources, the government last year met its budget deficit ceiling of P202 billion as the shortfall last year stood at P198.7 billion.

FCDU deposits hit all-time high of $13.4B in February

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOREIGN currencies deposited with the Philippine banking system surged to an all-time high of $13.4 billion while the peso is falling to historic lows against the US dollar.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the foreign currency deposit unit (FCDU) system generated the $13.4-billion deposit base as of Feb. 13.

"It's the highest level of FCDU deposits ever," Reyes said.

Based on the BSP's previous reports, FCDU deposit liabilities stood at $13.26 billion as of end-September last year.

FCDUs, considered as the country's secondary layer of foreign exchange reserves, historically attract more deposits whenever the peso is on a freefall against the US dollar. People and enterprises with dollars choose to park their funds in FCDUs—instead of converting these into pesos right away—in anticipation of a higher exchange rate in the future.

The higher build-up of FCDU deposits, however, does not necessarily translate to increased FCDU lending. Borrowers themselves, heeding lessons from the Asian currency turmoil, are averse to dollar loans these days due to the huge foreign exchange risks.

The rapid build-up of FCDU deposits is happening amid suspicions that the system may be subject to abuses by dollar-hoarders.

The BSP has approved new circulars to tighten its monitoring of banks' sale of dollars for non-trade purposes as well as the documentation of letters of credit (L/Cs) used to justify trade-related dollar purchases.

If banks sell foreign exchange other than for trade purposes, they are prohibited from crediting these to FCDU accounts.

If banks sell dollars for trade purposes, the buying clients are allowed to park these in their FCDU accounts for three days provided that there is a waiver on secrecy rights—so that examiners could check whether the purchases would indeed be used for trade transactions.

The regulatory tightening was in line with earlier suspicions that some dollar hoarders may be circumventing limits on dollar purchases using FCDUs.

Another circular to be issued by the BSP pertains to documentation requirements on L/Cs.

Examiners are given only a duplicate copy of L/Cs used to cover import requirements. The BSP will now require these duplicate copies to be notarized so that it can run after those who may abuse the facility.

"It's possible that there are double presentations—or the same importers using the same document to different banks," Reyes said.

BOC gets ₱500-M funding to curb corruption

MALACAÑANG has alloted P500 million for the improvement of the monitoring system in the Bureau of Customs, a move intended to curb corruption in the government agency.

The P500-million fund was recently approved by the National Economic and Development Authority and released to the BOC.

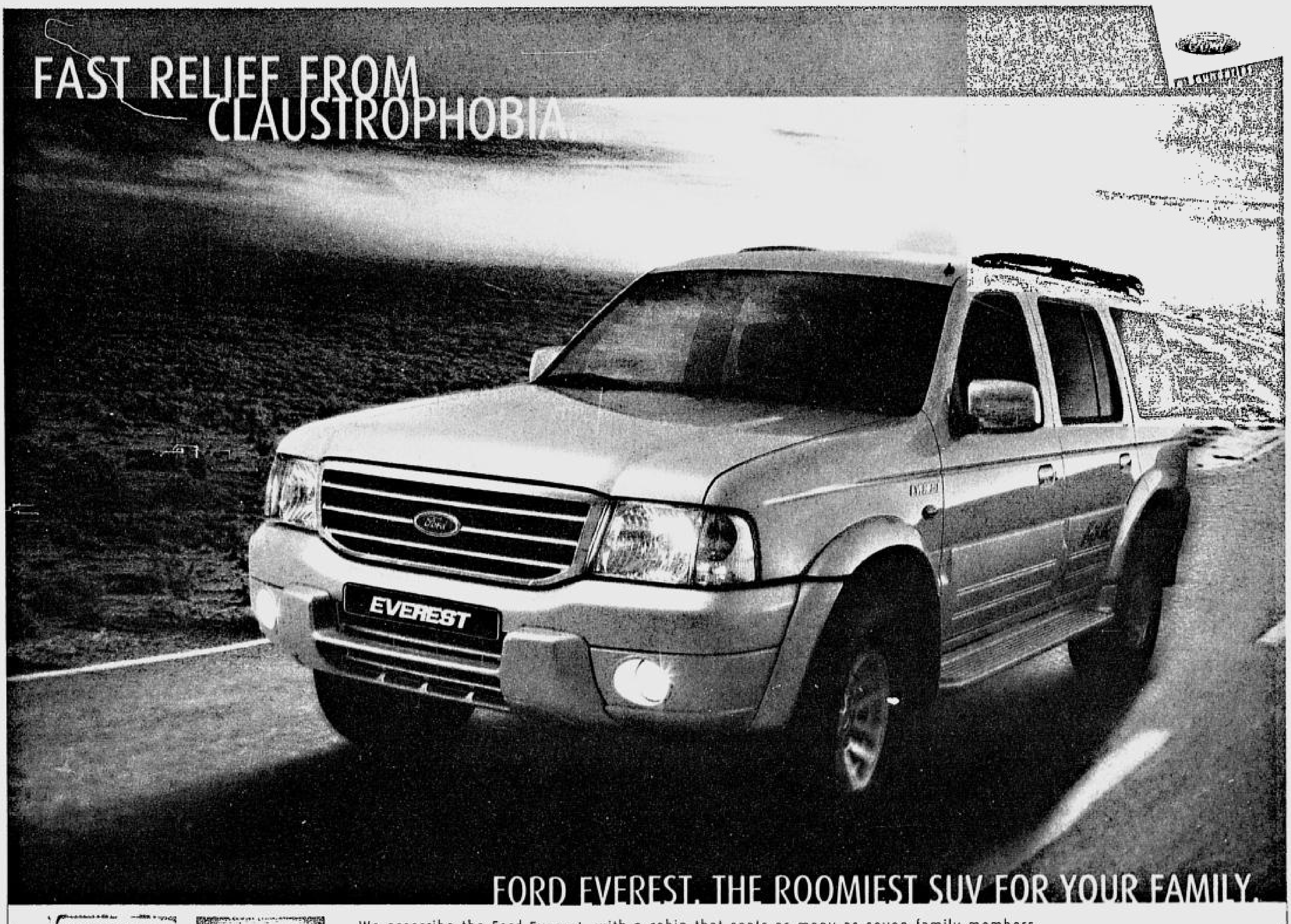
According to Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo, the budget would be used to pursue the automation of the BOC's operations and the streamlining of the agency's document processing.

"We are taking away unnecessary requirements and signatories to various documents, so that face-to-face contact between BOC employees and the people would be minimized. That way, cases of corruption would be reduced," Bernardo said in an interview.

He said the BOC was set to issue simplified transaction guidelines, which the government agency would disseminate to the public. He added that people being required by any BOC employee to follow old transaction processes may report to his office.

Bernardo also said the BOC would extend the coverage of its Internet-based transactions to allow more companies to pay duties

BOC/B2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Century Properties buys BCDA lots in Fort Boni for ₱200M

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority said it had sold some of its few remaining lots in Fort Bonifacio to Century Properties Inc. for P200 million.

Century Properties acquired the Bonifacio South lots 4 and 5, which are within the Expanded Big Delta near the Market! Market! Mall, the BCDA said in a statement.

The company is expected to develop the 3,266-square-meter property into a mixed-used area that may include residential, entertainment and recreation facilities as well as retail shops, offices, hotel and restaurants.

Under the contract of sale, the new owner will begin the development of the property within the next two years.

One of the BCDA's mandates under Republic Act No. 7227 is to manage the asset conversion and disposal of former military baselands to raise funds for the Armed Forces modernization program.

To date, the agency has remitted to the national government a total of P6.51 billion for the program.

Last week, the BCDA announced that it had sold P1.04 billion worth of property in Fort Bonifacio and in Camp Bago Bantay, Quezon City.

BCDA president and chief executive Rufo Colayco said Bellevue Properties Inc., an affiliate of SM Prime Holdings Inc., bought the Quezon City lot for P695 million while Megaworld Corp. bought a lot in Fort Bonifacio that was formerly owned by Vetronix for P343.3 million.

The five-hectare former military camp in Bago Bantay is located behind SM City North shopping mall near Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City.

The 6.68-hectare land that Megaworld acquired is located at the former Self-Reliance and Development Program Complex in Fort Bonifacio.

Megaworld will develop the property mainly for residential use. However, the development will have commercial and institutional components to include retail shops, schools and sports and recreational facilities.

Under the agreement, Megaworld will begin the development of the Vetronix property within two years from the time of the sale.

GOINGS-ON

Supply management meet

SUPPLYLINK 2004, the country's first conference on the materials and supply management, will be held on March 4-5 at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, the Philippine Institute for Supply Management said.

PISM president Miraluz C. Tan said the conference's theme "Strengthening Alliances, Building Linkages, Renewing Relationships" aims to highlight the need for enhancing linkages with the supply chain.

For more information, please contact Thess Ranon of PISM at telephone numbers 634-6632 or 638-4024., or fax inquiries at 634-6348.

Marketing educators' confab

MARKETING professors, industry practitioners and students will gather on March 2 for the 14th National Marketing Educators' Conference and the 6th National Students' Marketing Conference to be held simultaneously from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Manila Hotel.

Organized by the Association of Marketing Educators (AME-Philippines), the conference adopted the theme "Just the facts! The marketing move!"

For additional information, contact Annabelle Payawal at tel. Nos. 634-5664, 634-4890 or email at ameinc"philonline.com

BOC gets . . .

From page B1

with less hassle. Online payment of duties is undertaken under the BOC's tie-up with the Bankers Association of the Philippines, whose member-banks accept Internet-based duty payments for the customs bureau.

The BOC, the government's second largest revenue contributor, is tasked to further improve its collection to help ease the country's huge budget deficit. For this year, the BOC has a collection target of P110.58 billion.

The BOC's collection last year stood at P106.06 billion, surpassing its full-year target for the first time in years.

Bernardo said one way to keep up with its revenue performance last year was to intensify campaign against corrupt employees.

Only recently, the BOC filed cases of graft against nine employees involved in the smuggling of 19 container vans of chickens at the port of Batangas. *Michelle V. Remo*

SGI property arm embarking on ₱350-M residential venture

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HOLDING company Solid Group Inc. (SGI) said it would venture into a P350-million residential development through its subsidiary, Solid Manila Corp.

In a disclosure, the company said its property arm would undertake the development of a Tri-Tower Residential Condominium although the location has yet to be disclosed.

Under the first phase of the project, the company will build a 28-story tower. SGI said it would advance the initial amount required by its property subsidiary.

In another development, SGI said its board had agreed to increase the company's investments in foreign bonds and equities to $10 million from the planned $5 million.

The investments will be made through a wholly owned offshore subsidiary which has yet to be identified. Last year, the company planned to invest 20 percent of its cash hoard of about P1.75 billion in foreign currency-denominated bonds.

The move then was prompted by the drop in the interest income from its P1.75-billion cash on hand as of 2002 due to the decline in local interest rates.

SGI also said it had approved the purchase of a 32.5-percent stake in SSEC Inc. and 40 percent of Precos Inc. from Sony Corp. and Sony International Singapore for P40 million. After this purchase, SGI will take full control of the two firms. No further details were disclosed as officials were unavailable for comment.

Aside from electronics manufacturing, Solid Group has interests in real estate and Internet businesses.

ATR Kim Eng subsidiary seen issuing ₱100M worth of shares

SUCAT Land Corp., a wholly owned property firm of investment holding company ATR Kim Eng Financial Corp. will issue about P100 million worth of shares to retire maturing debt this year.

In a disclosure, ATRKE Financial executive vice president Renato L. Leveriza Jr. said Sucat Land will issue one million preferred shares which will increase the authorized capital stock of the property firm to P410 million from P310 million. The shares will have a par value of P100 per share.

Leveriza, in a separate interview, said that a chunk of the additional capital would be used to retire P82 million worth of debt that will mature by the end of the year.

The preferred shares issuance will also allow holders to share in Sucat Land's expected revenues once a proposed residential-commercial development takes off.

Sucat Land is in talks with prospective joint venture partners for the development of a 9.7-hectare property along the South Super Highway on the East Service Road. The initial phase or a cluster of the residential, medium-rise buildings may cost roughly P100 million.

ATRKE Financial said during its stockholders' meeting last year that Sucat Land had appointed LandExcel Consulting Inc. to undertake a "highest" and "best use" study and Palafox Associates to prepare the conceptual master plan and conceptual architectural design for the property.

The land was the former manufacturing site of Firestone and Goodrich Tires, whose manufacturer Philtread Holdings Corp. was acquired by the ATR-Kim Eng group and used as a backdoor listing vehicle on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

"Under a joint-venture arrangement, Sucat Land envisions that it will be the landowner/developer and the joint-venture partner will contribute the construction, technical and marketing expertise and provide and/or arrange the funding for the development of the property," ATR disclosed earlier.

The property then was estimated at P500 million in book value or P5,000 per square meter. *Beth L. Sanchez*

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Photo by Fol Rana, Jr.

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 27, 2004)

STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	8,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	17	17	35,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46	46	45.5	45.5	317,100
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	1,860
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38.5	39	38.5	38.5	50,400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.56	0.56	280,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	26	25	25	430,100
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	500
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	24,300
Security Bank Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	600
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	150,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	135	135	135	135	10
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	9,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	165	169	165	166	9,200
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1495	1495	1495	1495	1,620
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23	23	23	1,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.7	470,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	885	890	880	885	73,020
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.037	0.035	0.037	6,200,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.56	1.56	13,689,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	980	980	970	970	107,760
Ivantage Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	20,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	22,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.5	5,300
Manila Electric Co. B	32	32	31.5	32	563,300
Petron Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	770,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	20,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	547,000
Negros Navigation Co.Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	80,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.28	1.34	1.28	1.34	1,540,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	116,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31.5	31	31.5	66,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19.25	19.5	18.75	19	293,900
Swift Food Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.25	0.25	260,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	200,400
San Miguel Corp. B	70	70	70	70	54,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	190,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	8	8	8	8	4,000
Ayala Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	2,900,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	155,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	2,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.59	6,360,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	990,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.5	152,000
Global Business Hldgs Inc.	45	48	45	48	500
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.94	1.88	1.94	190,000
Keppel Holdings	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	60,000
Medco Holdings	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	5,020,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	2,372,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	5,290,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	154,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	10,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	3,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.28	20,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	16,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	50,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.52	1,450,000
Manila Jockey Club	9	9	9	9	3,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	300,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	1,042,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,600
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	400	400	400	400	4,410
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.5	4,723,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	30,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.2	0.21	700,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.04	1,258,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.1	2.16	2.1	2.16	200,000
City & Land Developers	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2	2	2	2	10,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	36,130,000
MINING					
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.46	2.1	1.46	1.5	960,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1,200,000
OIL					
Sinophil Corp.	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.025	1,100,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,320,490	34,154,660.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	74,073,490	297,830,255.00
PRO	43,062,000	248,278,140.00
Mining	2,160,000	2,315,000.00
OIL	1,100,000	28,700.00
GRAND TOTALS :	121,715,980	582,606,755.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	432.97	DOWN 1.09
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,313.68	DOWN 4.49
PRO	530.60	DOWN 1.18
Mining	1,526.13	UNCH 0.00
OIL	1.27	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	941.58	UP 0.09
Composite	1,483.18	DOWN 2.79

NO. OF ADVANCES: 16; NO. OF DECLINES: 26; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 48; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 90; NO. OF TRADES: 1,458

DISCLOSURES

THE BOARD of directors of **Solid Group Inc.** accepted the resignation of Washington SyCip as director. Edgardo Tordesillas was elected to replace him. The firm's annual stockholders' meeting was set for May 25.

* * *

ALLIED Banking Corp. confirmed that it was planning to raise $50 million in additional capital through dollar-denominated borrowings.

* * *

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29 at 8 a.m. at the ABS-CBN Broadcasting Center in Quezon City. The record date is March 15.

* * *

APC Group Inc. announced the retirement of Evelyn R. Singson as the company president effective end-February.

* * *

FIRST Metro Investment Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 27 at the Metrobank Plaza, Makati City at 4 p.m. The record date is March 15.

* * *

MABUHAY Vinyl Corp. scheduled its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29 with the record date set for March 30.

* * *

PHILEX Mining Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 29 at 2 p.m. at Holiday Inn Manila in Pasig City.

* * *

JG Summit Holdings Inc. will hold its special stockholders meeting on March 18 at 4 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Galleria Manila in Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of Feb. 24 are entitled to vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

February 27, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.803794	1.000000	56.2750
Japan	Yen	0.007337	0.009128	0.5137
United Kingdom	Pound	1.496745	1.862100	104.7897
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.103269	0.128477	7.2300
Switzerland	Franc	0.634357	0.789204	44.4125
Canada	Dollar	0.599086	0.745323	41.9431
Singapore	Dollar	0.471960	0.587165	33.0427
Australia	Dollar	0.619494	0.770713	43.3719
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.132193	2.652661	149.2785
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.214357	0.266681	15.0075
Brunei	Dollar	0.470578	0.585446	32.9460
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000095	0.000118	0.0066
Thailand	Baht	0.020453	0.025445	1.4319
UAE	Dirham	0.218863	0.272287	15.3230
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.244100	70.0117
Argentina	Peso	0.275037	0.342173	19.2558
Brazil	Real	0.273678	0.340483	19.1607
Denmark	Kroner	0.134201	0.166959	9.3956
India	Rupee	0.017783	0.022124	1.2450
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.211553	0.263193	14.8112
Mexico	New Peso	0.072709	0.090457	5.0905
New Zealand	Dollar	0.552208	0.687002	38.6610
Norway	Kroner	0.113983	0.141806	7.9801
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014025	0.017449	0.9819
South Africa	Rand	0.121763	0.151485	8.5248
Korea	Won	0.000683	0.000850	0.0478
Sweden	Kroner	0.108355	0.134804	7.5861
Syria	Pound	0.018272	0.022732	1.2792
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024269	0.030193	1.6991
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000420	0.000522	0.0294

January budget deficit seen hitting ₱16.5B

AMATONG PDI PHOTO

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT'S budget deficit in January stood at P16.5 billion, which the Department of Finance said was a level safe enough to meet its objective of keeping the gap within the P197.8-billion ceiling.

The preliminary budget deficit figure for the month was higher than the P13.9 billion recorded in the same month last year.

While the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) has yet to come up with the monthly deficit targets, Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said the preliminary deficit figure showed that government expenditures were well managed and revenue was on track to meeting the government's full-year projection.

"The P16.5-billion deficit last month is within the fiscal program for the year," Amatong told reporters.

The DBCC, where the DOF is a member, is responsible in crafting the government's fiscal targets. It was not able to finalize the government's monthly deficit targets as scheduled because of the failure of Congress to pass the 2004 budget.

The government will, therefore, be working on a reenacted budget, with which the DBCC will base the monthly deficit targets.

The DBCC is set to meet on Thursday to finalize the monthly fiscal targets.

Under the proposed 2004 General Appropriations Act, government expenditure was programmed at P869 billion, while revenue target was set at P671.2 billion, or a deficit of 197.8 billion.

Although the DBCC may have to change the monthly deficit targets based on the reenacted 2003 budget, the full-year deficit target stated under the proposed 2004 budget will be kept. Under the 2004 proposed budget, the government's full-year deficit was set at P197.8 billion.

This is the second time that the Macapagal administration will be using a reenacted budget. In 2001, the government adopted the 2000 budget after former President Joseph Estrada was ousted from office and replaced by Ms Macapagal.

According to the Department of Finance, the "safe" deficit level during the month was largely attributed to the contributions of the Bureau of Customs and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, whose combined revenue collections stood at P45.77 billion.

The BIR collected P36.2 billion in January, which was higher than the P34.1 billion collected during the same month in 2003, although lower than its P38-billion target for the month.

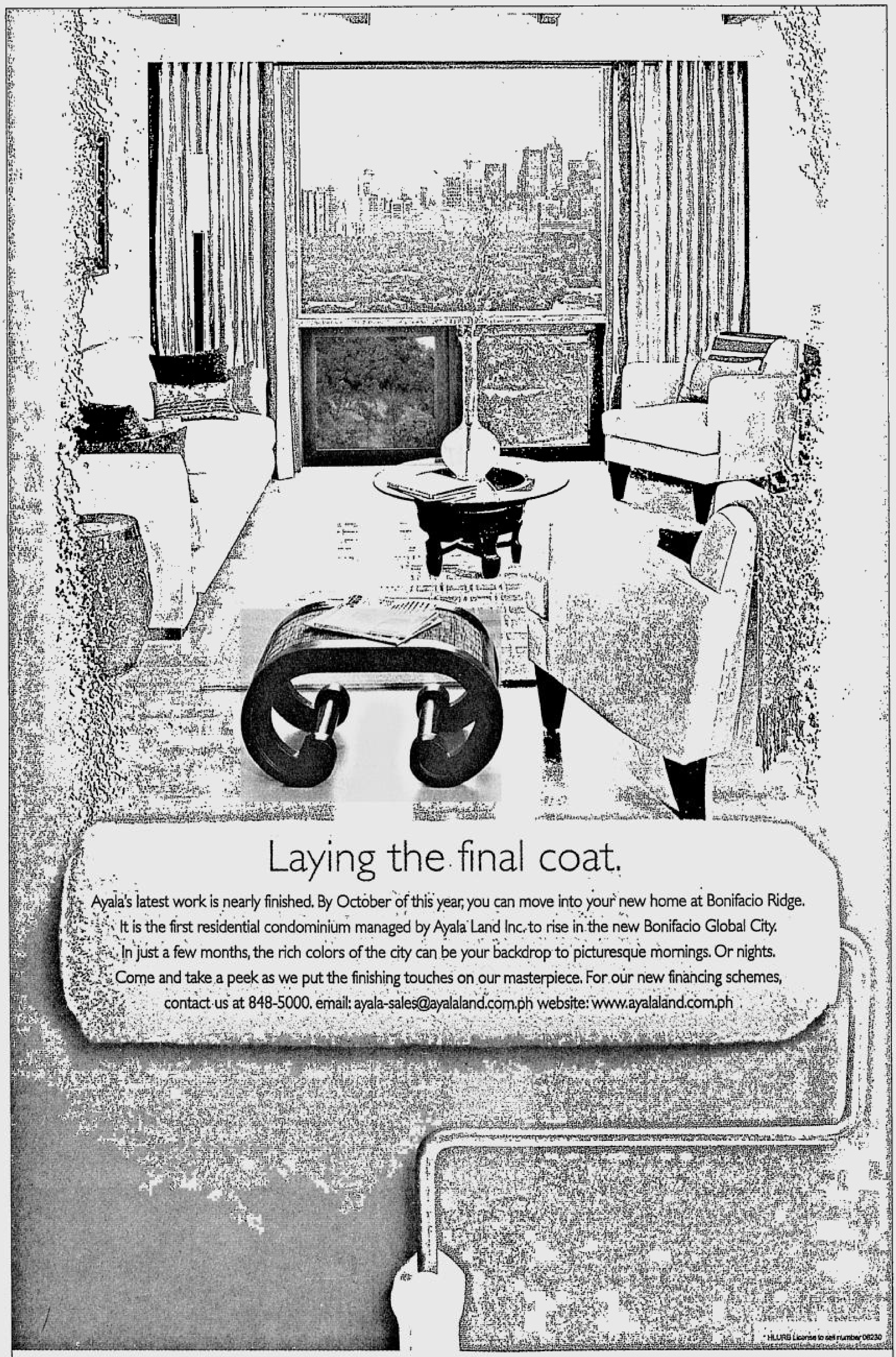
The BOC, for its part, collected P9.57 billion in January, which was higher than its target of P8.5 billion.

Last year, the government's full-year deficit stood at P199.9 billion, which was even below the ceiling of P202 billion.

The government's ability to keep the deficit within the ceiling was attributed to the revenue contributions of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, which both achieved their collection targets for the first time in many years.

The BIR collected P425.3 billion, surpassing its full-year target of P424 billion. BOC's collection reached P106.06 billion in the same period.

The government's perceived fiscal discipline, as shown by its ability to achieve its revenue and deficit targets last year, was considered by credit-rating agencies as one of its strengths.



Laying the final coat.

Ayala's latest work is nearly finished. By October of this year, you can move into your new home at Bonifacio Ridge. It is the first residential condominium managed by Ayala Land Inc. to rise in the new Bonifacio Global City. In just a few months, the rich colors of the city can be your backdrop to picturesque mornings. Or nights. Come and take a peek as we put the finishing touches on our masterpiece. For our new financing schemes, contact us at 848-5000. email: ayala-sales@ayalaland.com.ph website: www.ayalaland.com.ph

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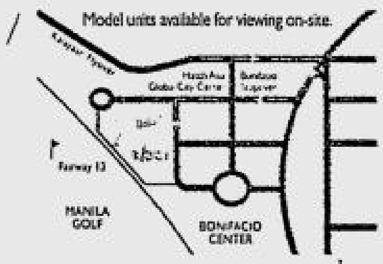

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Developed by
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Why move to Bonifacio Ridge?

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✓ *Now on the rise in the new Bonifacio Global City.* This is the first residential condominium managed and marketed by Ayala Land, Inc. that is strategically situated in the most modern and fully master-planned business district in the country. With the Ayala Campos group now behind Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation, the Global City is an emerging reinvention of the conventional metropolis.

✓ *Right at the heart of modern living.* Lush hectares of the adjacent Manila Golf Course await homeowners, along with magnificent views of the Makati Central Business District skyline. Close to schools, shopping and entertainment centers, restaurants, public services, office spaces and soon a world-class hospital facility, the Bonifacio Ridge is just 5 minutes away from Makati via the Kalayaan Flyover.

✓ *Two towers that echo beauty and indulgence.* Standing on 7,600 square meters of prime land in the northwestern portion of the Bonifacio Global City, Bonifacio Ridge is a beautifully crafted two-tower (Cypress Point and Spanish Bay Towers) residential condominium with a shared podium surrounded by exquisitely sculpted landscape and all the things that spell out a good life.

✓ *An abundance of open space.* The Bonifacio Ridge is a low-density community. Its location at the northwestern portion of the Bonifacio Global City makes it less crowded than other areas. Here, there will always be plenty of room to play, rest and breathe.

✓ *Going beyond your needs.* Escape from the frantic pace of city life the moment you enter the lobby. Hushed foyers are nestled within a series of arbors and greens. Complete top-of-the-line amenities are also found at the podium level that extends up to 4,000 square meters. Take a private dip in the pool, do a quick run at the jogging area, or mingle with neighbors at the multi-purpose hall. Children also have their own kiddie pool and play area.

✓ *All in the details.* Enjoy living spaces that truly enhance the way you live. Each tower has 18 floors and only 144 units, all measuring approximately 113 square meters. Residences afford generous space and are designed for entertaining while enjoying the panoramic views. A few of its many special features are beech wood veneer floor planks (less prone to wear and tear), air-conditioning units for all bedrooms and den, finished bathrooms with imported fixtures, built-in modular closets with mirror doors for bedrooms, fully fitted maple kitchen cabinets with accessories, and plug-and-play cable and internet connections.

✓ *Luxury and high style within your means.* Units are made more affordable through flexible payment options. Metrobank, Equitable-PCI, or Banco de Oro can finance up to 80% of total purchase price, enabling buyers to avail of cash discounts with only 20% equity.

✓ *Unmatched standards.* Backed by the quality and maintenance of an Ayala-managed property, Bonifacio Ridge is the perfect setting for the kind of lifestyle so many individuals crave for.

Driven by comfort, beauty, luxury and simplicity, the Bonifacio Ridge is the ideal community for young executives, baby-boomers, empty nesters and retirees, as well as investors seeking to make a secure financial decision. Designed for homeowners of all ages, it has successfully created an upscale, vibrant community that meets the needs of all its residents. Unique in value, view, price and location, Bonifacio Ridge is truly something you can count on because it was made for you.

Interested? Call us at 848-5000. You may also email *ayala-sales@ayalaland.com.ph* or log on to *www.ayalaland.com.ph* . Model units are available for viewing on-site at 1st Street, Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila.

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Right nutrition begins with right information

MANY tragedies and mishaps occur due to lack of information. Ignorance in certain matters can lead to fires, accidents and even prejudice towards certain people.

The harmful effect of a lack of information is especially true in relation to our physical well-being, where, what we don't know can literally affect our health; we often fail to do what is good for us simply because we just aren't aware of it.

It is not difficult to research information. Aside from the Internet, newspapers can give you credible information-news on the latest advances regarding health and nutrition, recipes for a healthy diet, how the lack of certain foods can affect you-just by turning to the different sections. All you need is a little time (maybe over breakfast) to read up.

In fact knowing how to be healthy is constantly being made easier for us by technology.

So read up - armed with the proper information, we'll be able to see the big picture and know exactly what food we need to avoid and what to buy even before we make a grocery list.

National Steel Corporation

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS TO BUY

National Steel Corporation is inviting offers to purchase by the way of sealed proposals, for cash and on "as-is-where-is" basis, the following assets located at NSC Iligan Plant:

SCRAP METALS, REUSABLE MATERIALS, HEAVY EQUIPMENT

Detailed list of the above assets terms & conditions and proposal forms are available from the following:

MR. JESUS H. GARCIA	Makati City	Tel. No.: (02) 752-4495 to 98
MR. NESTOR MIRAFUENTES	Iligan City	Tel. No.: (063) 221-3758

Deadline for the submission of proposals will be on March 11, 2004 at 3 PM in either of the following addresses:

- Unit 2701, 88 Corporate Center Building, 141 Sedeño corner Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City.
- Office of the Plant Manager, Admin II Building, NSC Iligan Plant, Suarez, Iligan City

Winning bidders shall be advised accordingly.

The NSC Liquidator reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any formality found therein, and to accept such proposals as may be considered most advantageous to NSC's interest.

(PDI–February 21 & 28, 2004)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar St. cor. Dr. J. Quintos St., Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-00-00; 526-01-00 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietors; or (b) 60% Filipino-owned Partnership/Corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item/Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2004-026	30 units LAPTOP COMPUTERS (with carrying cases)	P 2,250,000.00	LBP Funds

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on March 24, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on March 12, 2004, 9:00 a.m. at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

ANTONIO T. HERNANDEZ
SVP, Corporate Services & Subsidiaries Sector
Chairman, Committee on Bids and Awards

(PDI–February 28 & March 5, 2004)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee – Head Office, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites BSP, G-EPS registered companies/contractors and other interested suppliers to a public bidding for:

* Training Ammo

Qty.	Unit	Article(s)/Specification(s)	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
150,000	rounds	Cal. 9mm Full Metal Jacket Parabellum	P2,325,000.00
150,000	rounds	Cal. 5.56mm Full Metal Jacket (223)	2,700,000.00
3,000	rounds	Cal. 7.62mm Full Metal Jacket (308)	84,000.00
5,000	rounds	Gauge 12 "00" Lead Shot	100,000.00
5,000	rounds	Gauge 12 "6" Lead Shot	100,000.00
5,000	rounds	Gauge 12 "4" Lead Shot	100,000.00

* Service Ammo

Qty.	Unit	Article(s)/Specification(s)	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
64,650	rounds	Cal. 9mm Full Metal Jacket Parabellum	P1,939,500.00
64,650	rounds	Cal. 5.56mm Full Metal Jacket (223)	2,327,400.00
3,000	rounds	Cal. 7.62mm Full Metal Jacket (308)	180,000.00
5,000	rounds	Gauge 12 "00" Lead Shot	125,000.00
5,000	rounds	Gauge 12 "6" Lead Shot	125,000.00
5,000	rounds	Gauge 12 "4" Lead Shot	125,000.00
5,500	rounds	G-3 Ca. 7.62 FMJ	110,000.00
6,000	rounds	US Carbine Cal. 30 (M-2)	108,000.00

Delivery Period : **Within ninety (90) calendar days after receipt of the Permit to Purchase Ammunition (PPA) from the Firearms & Explosives Division (FED), PNP**

Bid documents are available from **March 1, 2004** to **March 12, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00 or .05% of the approved budget of the contract per item whichever is higher but not to exceed P50,000.00 at the following:

BAC Secretariat
Rm. 212, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building
cor. A. Mabini and P. Ocampo Sr. Sts., Malate, Manila
Tel. No(s). 524-7011 local 3097/523-9463

Pre-bid Conference Date and Time: March 19, 2004, 2:00 p.m.
Bidding Date and Time: March 30, 2004, not later than 10:00 a.m.
Place: Room MR2A, 2nd Floor, 5-storey Building, BSP Main Complex, Malate, Manila

Interested bidders shall submit not later than the bidding date and time the following documents in three (3) separate envelopes:

Envelope No. 1:
1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers
2. Y2002 Audited Financial Statements (Income Statement & Balance Sheet)
3. Y2002 Income Tax Return
4. Valid and current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License
5. Taxpayer's Identification Number
6. Prospective bidder's computation of Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which shall be at least equal to the ABC, duly signed by the authorized signing official and supported with pertinent documents, i.e., financial statements and copies of on-going project contracts/P.O.s; or a commitment from a licensed bank to extend a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or a cash deposit certificate in an amount of not lower than 10% of the ABC. The NFCC shall be computed as follows: NFCC = [(Current Assets Less Current Liabilities) (K)] minus value of all outstanding projects; K=10
7. Duly notarized statement that the firm is not blacklisted from bidding in any Government Office, Agency, Corporation
8. Letter authorizing the BAC or its duly authorized representative to verify any or all of the documents submitted for eligibility check
9. Duly notarized certification by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative that each of the documents submitted is an original copy of a true and faithful reproduction or copy of the original
10. Current license/authority to manufacture/deal of firearms and ammunitions issued by the Philippine National Police
11. Duly notarized certification issued by the Firearms & Explosives Division (FED), PNP that the firm have no pending criminal/administrative cases filed before them
12. Duly notarized certification of distributorship/dealership from the foreign supplier/manufacturer of ammunitions
13. List of satisfied clients complete with their addresses, telephone/fax numbers and copies of completed and on-going contracts (government and private) for the last two (2) years

Envelope No. 2:
1. Instructions to Bidders
2. Certification of Compliance with the Terms and Conditions of the bidding
3. Original Bid Security

Envelope No. 3:
- Price Proposal

All envelopes shall be dropped in the bid box located at the abovementioned place. **LATE BIDS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

The BSP assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses incurred in the preparation of the bids.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **MARCOS J. SIONGCO, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–February 28, 2004)

Bits & Clips

Child Savvy seminar

CORBAN Daycare and Tutorial Center will present the seminar "Child Savvy" for new parents, preschool educators and yayas. The seminar will talk about the psychological and emotional life of children from ages one to six. The seminar is slated today, from 9 to 12 a.m. Interested parties may call Corban at 842-6665/809-3050.

Scriptwriting seminar

A SCRIPTWRITING seminar is slated today, from 9 to 4 p.m. at 19 Hidalgo St. San Lorenzo Village. The seminar will be conducted by Nenette Pacoli, regional director of Good News (Phils) Inc. The cost of the seminar is P2,500 inclusive of lunch, two snacks and handouts. Those interested may call Vinecom at 842-6665/809-3050.

Wedding fair at Forbes Park

THE GARDEN area of Santuario de San Antonio Parish Center, Forbes Park, Makati City will host the 3rd "May Kasal Sa Forbes Park, A Wedding Fair" on Feb. 28 and 29. The lawn will feature various caterers displaying their own signature and designs of garden wedding interpretation. The event is organized by Philtrade Exhibits, for details call 825-0804 or 825-3482.

Preschool Circle of the Philippines confab

THE ASIAN Psychological Services and Assessment Corp (Apsa) in its aim to respond to the emerging issue of identifying quality of educational standards, will sponsor the Annual Convention of the Preschool Circle of the Phils today at the Metropolitan Club Inc, Makati City. For more details, contact Apsa at (632)788-0736 and look for Ciel, Teng, Nette or Ruel, or Jesiel at (632)820-8714.

V. Mapa HS alumni events

THE V. Mapa (Manila East) High School Alumni Association Inc will hold its annual homecoming and general assembly on Feb. 28, 1 p.m. at V. Mapa High School, San Rafael St., San Miguel, Manila; and a grand reunion on Feb. 29, 1 p.m. at the Bahay ng Alumni, Magsaysay Ave., UP Diliman, QC. For more information, contact the following: Dr. Grace Rualo-Pasigan '54, chair, social and fellowship committee at 637-0307/0916-4529887; or Rey Lim '70, co-chair, at 563-9190/563-9202/0917-9918624; or Connie Carpio-Gurne, member, at 716-0540/713-5511.

RPCWYE grand reunion

THE REPUBLIC of the Philippines-Canada World Youth Exchange (RPCWYE), a program aimed at exposing Filipino and Canadian youth participants in the culture of Canada and the Philippines is set to hold a grand reunion in Manila and Subic, Zambales from Feb. 28 to March 4. For particulars, members may call 811-9352 and 0917-5239460 or email rpcwye@yahoo.com.

Make candles for business

ON FEB. 29, there will be a seminar entitled Decorative Candle Making at the UPAA Alumni Hostel, Ylanan St. cor. Magsaysay Ave., UP Diliman QC, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., conducted by Seminars and Events Managemet Co. Call Geraldine at 724-7990 or 725-2936.

'Sing Young' contest

'SING Young' is an open competition among songwriters and their singer-interpreters for songs dedicated to the young or the next generation. Entries must consist of original lyrics and melody submitted in either tape or CD format, complete with the lyrics printout. The deadline for submission of entries is on Feb. 29. Entries must be submitted to the IABC Secretariat at Unit 407, Asian Mansion 1, 109 De La Rosa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. For more information contact IABC at 892-9592.

BayanTel promo

FOR A minimum P650 worth of calls to any 1-908 hotlines, cellphone, or NDD calls to a landline on a BayanTel phone from Feb. 1 to 29, a BayanTel subscriber is entitled to a P200 gift certificate from Red Ribbon. To claim, just present statement of account for February 2004 with proof of payment to the customer service representative at any Bayad Center. Subscribers are given until April 30 to claim their Red Ribbon goodies.

Odiongan Angkang Meñez reunion/outreach

THE ODIONGAN Angkang Meñez clan will hold its reunion/outreach on April 10 at Odiongan, Romblon. For inquiries, call 420-2911.

Leviste runs

LEVISTE

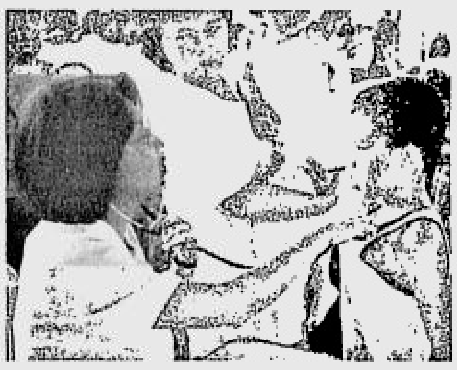
MARC Leviste, son of real estate tycoon and former Board of Investments governor Conrad Leviste, will seek a seat in the provincial board of the 4th district of the province of Batangas. A marketing management graduate of De La Salle, the 26-year old Leviste said he will work to promote the welfare of the youth and provide programs for entrepreneurship and the environment for his constituents in the 4th district, as well as revive and enhance the prospects of the tourism industry in his scenic and beach-laden province.

FRES-C SPONSORS SINULOG FESTIVAL

Fres-C Powder Drink Mix drummed up Cebuanos during the recent celebration of the Sinulog Festival. A newly launched product of Ajinomoto Phils Corp (APC), Fres-C is a concentrated powder drink mix which offers refreshing goodness similar to that of a freshly-squeezed juice. The Fres-C team roamed in various supermarkets in Cebu City. Hundreds of excited shoppers tasted Fres-C's delicious orange, pineapple and pomelo fruit flavors. The Sinulog celebration was even made more colorful with the happy face of the Fres-C mascot printed in banners and bunting adorning various areas in Cebu City.

MERCURY DRUG CELEBRATES 59TH ANNIVERSARY

Mercury Drug celebrates its 59th year anniversary on March 1 with the holding of its annual 'Operation Bigay Lunas' (OBL) in fifty-four cities and municipalities nationwide. A simultaneous one-day free consultations and medicines targeting about 100,000 beneficiaries, OBL is supported by Mercury Drug's business partners, provincial governors, city and municipal mayors. It is Mercury Drug's way of thanking its customers, for their continuos patronage which help the company pursue its commitment of continuously be the leading, trusted and caring drugstore.



Saving Filipinos from cavities

ORAL Health Month takes center stage as it goes full blast with a whole slew of activities that promise to bring dental health wcare so much closer to the Filipino. To celebrate this important event, Colgate's Save the World from Cavities Mission is more than ably supported by the Philippine Dental Association and the Department of Education. All three organizations have pulled out all the stops to ensure that the celebration is a huge success.

Free dental check-ups will be conducted in 200 public schools nationwide. Now, there's no excuse for not being able to have one's teeth checked. Children and adults are invited to spend a weekend in a public school nearby and avail of these free check-ups by volunteer dentists. Plus, free Colgate toothpaste and toothbrushes will be given away to ensure that the public continues to take care of their teeth at home. Free tooth extractions will also be given to those who need it and lectures on proper brushing habits will also be held.

Since Oral Health Month aims to educate the public on proper dental health care, Dr. Rabbit, the Colgate mascot, will also be reinforcing the 4 key oral hygiene tips in supermarkets nationwide: 1. Brush your teeth after eating or at least twice a day; 2. Use a toothpaste with fluoride; 3. Avoid eating sweets which could lead to tooth decay; 4. Consult your dentist at least once a year. Let's show how much we love our teeth by taking good care of it every single day of the year.

GARFIELD IMAGE MODEL SEARCH

Canary Enterprises Inc announces the Search for its Image Models for Garfield Garments for the girls' line only, for the year 2004. It is open to young girls from 4 to 10 years old who have the knack for ramp and print modeling, who will represent Garfield garments in its various events, productions and shows. Aside from a one-year modeling career, winners will have the chance to develop their talents and potentials, and will receive various prizes from Garfield. Photo shows the 2003 Garfield image models (from left) Kathryn Bernardo, JJ Zamora, Iommi Brillo and Miguel Aguila. Details can be obtained at 722-9673/722-9671.

DSAP HONORS HALL OF FAME AWARDEES

The Direct Selling Association of the Philippines (DSAP) recently elevated 5 top direct selling achievers to the Hall of Fame during its 8th Annual Industry Awards. The Hall of Fame Award is given to those who are three-time consecutive awardees for the same category. Shown in photo are: (first row, from left) Arlene Balangue, Herbalife International (Phils) Inc; Esperanza Garcia, Tupperware Philippine Inc; Paola Llorando, Nu Skin Phils Inc; (top row, from left) Angelina Chan, Waters Philippines; Ma. Ana Ylagan, Global-Brands Co Inc. Not in photo is Ronald Llorando of Nu Skin Phils Inc.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2004

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FINANCING-EASY FAST VERY PRIVATE CONVENIENT H/L BUSINESS PERSONAL Gigie Ernie 8903461 loc 25/23

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IBM PLAZA EASTWOOD LIBIS QC 0917-8133010

MALATE MLA 526-8048/49

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

MITSUBISHI

L300 V.Van 97 Mdl Gas pwr Str Gray 0919-5194224

NISSAN

'02 Frontier 3.2AT 4x2
500T Fresh 0917-5121653

TOYOTA

CAMRY 1997
P450T/Neg. • 0920-9100000

VOLVO

2002Volvo S60 T5 18K Km 1.6M Neg. Ava/Lee 8481466

OTHER CAR BRANDS

Pajero Land Cruiser Surf Delica Space Gear Serena Safari Terrano MU Previa Town-Hi Ace Vanette Elf Canter etc A1 w/warranty T-In 9120647 09178342020

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

1T/Hiace 9136710/4333682

'97 Crla XL Ltd 1st Own Fully Loaded P240/Neg 8234623

ABC CARS / VANS
NEW MODELS W/ OR W/O DRIVER
MLA HO 536-8822 * 303-9789
Q.C. BR. 426-2278 * 426-4084
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1.5% 1HR CAR LOAN3743803

CAR LOAN

1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523/24

1.5% CAR LOAN 6567685

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 533-8254

1.5% Easy Carloan 7815352/55

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

CAR BUSNES OFW 524-3197

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

AUDIO/ VIDEO

Aowa Home&Ent Sys
Cmplete Bnew 0917-8214936

BILLIARDS

Sale/Rental/Servce 8014494

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

YAMAHA GRAND & UPRIGHT
ELITE PIANO CENTER
Almost New:TERMS-7213124

PETS

DOG TRAINER 0919-3419012

PHILIPPINE DOG SCHOOL TRAINS DOGS w/COMPETENCE TEL. 721-37-36

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late SOCORRO T. JAMILI has been extrajudicially settled with deed of absolute sale among her heirs before Notary Public Joaquin L. Delos Santos as per Doc. No. 335, Page No. 71, Book No. VII, Series of 2004.
(PDI-Feb. 28, Mar. 6 & 13, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that all BPI-Quezon Ave España branch Accts & Parcels of Land with TCT Nos. N-209473 & N-10804 of ADELINA G. MAYUGA has been self-adjudicated as per Doc 58, Page 52, Book IX, Series of 2003 of Notarial Public Manuel L. Hontanosas-Bohol.
(PDI Feb. 14, 21, & 28, 2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

12%/mon. 14T 0922-8053727

I NEED MEDICINES HOSP SUPPLIES & EQUIPT ANY QNTY TXT /CALL09275282875 Kristine

RETIRE 2YRS 09189051567

RTW factory price 3738821

PCCI

314th PCCI & 315th PCCI
ALL-BREEDS DOGSHOWS
RIVERBANKS CENTER
MARIKINA CITY
FEBRUARY 28-29, 2004
UNDER INT'L JUDGES
Ms. Christina Rafton
(Australia)
Mr. Keith Simmons
(New Zealand)
STRICTLY NO ADDENDUM
SHOW SCHEDULE
Saturday,
February 28, 2004

8:00 AM	- Registration
9:00 AM	- Judging
Ring 1&2	- Sporting Group
12:00 NN	- Lunch Break
12:30 PM	- Registration
1:00 PM	- Judging
Ring 1	- Hound, Terrier & Toy Group
Ring 2	- Terrier, Toy & Hound Group

Sunday,
February 29, 2004

8:00 AM	- Registration
9:00 AM	- Judging
Ring 1	- Non-Sporting & Herding Group
Ring 2	- Herding & Non-Sporting Group
12:00 NN	- Lunch Break
12:30 PM	- Registration
1:00 PM	- Judging
Ring 1	- Boxer, Rottweiler, G. Dane, Dobe, Husky
Ring 2	- S Husky, Dobe, G Dane, Boxer, Rottweiler

Best in Show

As per AO-# 32 S2000 of the Department of Agriculture Exhibitors are required to bring the updated vaccination records of their dogs duly certified by a Veterinarian with an updated PRC license and PTR.

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

NOTICE OF BIDDING

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)** wishes to announce that it will be accepting sealed offers for the Sale thru Market Determined Pricing 105,000 MT (2.1-M BAGS) more or less US Long Grain Hard Mill White Rice (4% Brokens) under 2003 USPL 480 Title 1 Program at the following indicative price:

a. **Ex-NFA Warehouse**

Region III and NCR - Php P17.01/kg or P850.50/bag

on **March 5, 2004** and **March 12, 2004** at 10:00 a.m. at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City.

A pre-bidding conference shall be held on **March 3, 2004** and **March 10, 2004** at 10:00 a.m. at the same venue. In the pre-bidding conference, interested bidders shall bring the following:

a. Original and xerox copy of NFA license (retailing, wholesaling and milling).
b. In case of representative, a duly notarized authorization from the owner, partner, chairman or president that he or she is authorized to represent the business entity in the pre-bidding, bidding proper and all activities thereto.

All interested bidders shall submit a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the total bid price in the form of Cashier's Check or Manager's Check from any reputable bank in Metro Manila.

Interested bidders may secure the terms and conditions starting **March 3, 2004** at DMO OCD, 5th Floor from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For any inquiries, please call tel. nos. 712-1572 and 712-1708.

Bid documents will be available on **March 3, 2004** and **March 10, 2004** to qualified bidders/offerors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality thereof, and to accept only such bids that are advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd) **ATTY. ARTHUR C. YAP**
Administrator

(PDI - Feb 27 & 28 2004)

ERRATUM

In the ad of **National Food Authority** re: Notice of Bidding of Ex-NFA Warehouse published in this paper on February 27, 2004, the **NFA** license was inadvertently spelled as DFA license.

Our apologies

URGENT!

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P18,000.00
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MALE/FEMALE

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FREE CAREGIVER TRAINING PROGRAM W/CERTIFICATE 5899958 5614990 5212773

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Qualifications:
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Qualified applicant kindly send in your detailed resumé and transcript together with an inexpensive photo to:

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P.O. Box 380
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Catherine A. Sas

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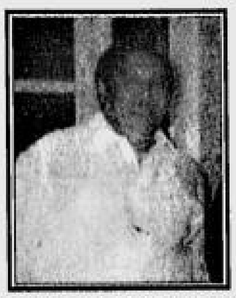
Immigrating to Canada



RENY DE LOS REYES
Immigration Consultant

CATHERINE SAS
Barrister and Solicitor

Ms. Catherine Sas will be coming to Manila for consultations regarding immigration to Canada on Friday, March 5 and Saturday, March 6, 2004. To book your consultation appointment, please call Mr. Reny de los Reyes at (02)-821-5030 or (02)-776-5227. Ms. Sas will be meeting with clients in Manila at the Business Centre of the Intercontinental Hotel in Makati.

CONSULTATION FEE: Php 1,000.00

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Tel. 310-.966.180	Toll Free: 1.888.689.5445	Tel: 250.954.1988

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MS. SAS IS A REGISTERED FOREIGN LEGAL CONSULTANT WITH THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA

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Mktng Ofc Asst 0920-8062187

OFC Nktg Staff 0918-5004906 Jaz

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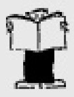

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PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
East Avenue, Quezon City

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Academic Year 2004

I. Fellowship in Adult Cardiology
- 3 years Residency in Internal Medicine accredited by PCP
- PCP Diplomate
  - Deadline for submission of application is on February 27, 2004
  - Academic Year 2004 starts on April 1, 2004

II. Fellowship in Pulmonary Medicine
- PCP Diplomate
  - Deadline for submission of application is on May 24, 2004
  - Academic Year 2004 starts on July 1, 2004

III. Fellowship in Anesthesiology
- 3 years Residency in General Anesthesia accredited by PBA (Board eligible)

IV. 1 Year Subspecialty Fellowship in:
- Cardiac Rehabilitation
- Electrophysiology
  - Deadline for submission of application is on March 5, 2004
  - Academic Year 2004 starts on April 1, 2004

General Requirements:

1. Medical Diploma
2. Transcript of Records with the General Weighted Average
3. Itemized Board Rating
4. Three (3) Letters of Recommendation (coming from different Doctors specifically the Training Officer &/or Director of the previous traning programs)
5. Four (4) pcs. 2"x2" picture colored
6. Certificate of Residency in required specialty
7. Specialty Board Certificate in required specialty

Please address your recommendations to:
JOSE A. YULDE, M.D.
Assistant Director
Office of Education and Research
Philippine Heart Center
East Avenue, Quezon City

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela M. Ocasion (cp# 09192885303) or Ms. Cleopatra Q. Palencia (cp# 09163021735) with Tel. Nos. 925-2401 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9622, or you can email to oer@phc.gov.ph

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TransCo
National Transmission Corporation
South Luzon Operations and Maintenance

February 19, 2004

INVITATION FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Transmission Corporation, South Luzon Operation and Maintenance invites interested Filipino contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects/undertaking: *(Application is also open to a joint venture of Filipino and foreign contractors with PCAB Special License for this project).*

Schedule	Contract Code/ Title	Location	Duration	Approved Budget for the Contract/ Source of Fund	License and Registration Particulars Issued by PCAB
I.	Trans-03-CDCKM-003PB2 Construction of Drainage Canal at Tower Nos. 62 and 63 along Kalayaan-Malaya 230kV Transmission Lines	Pakil-Laguna	60 calendar days	Php399,986.57 Source of Funding: (Internal Cash Generation)	– at least *"Trade, General Engineering* – at least *"Small A, Irrigation and Flood Control"*

The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of Furnishing All Labor, Materials, Supplies, Tools and Equipment, Supervision and other incidentals necessary to complete the Construction of Drainage Canal at Tower Nos. 62 and 63 along Kalayaan-Malaya 230kV Transmission Lines.

Applications for Eligibility (legal, technical and financial documents and statements) shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by NTC in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the contractor's offer to the contract under bidding, and shall be subject to Postqualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright.

Application for Eligibility and Eligibility Forms will be available for issuance starting March 1, 2004 up to March 12, 2004 at the: Regional Contracts Management Office, Administration Division, NTC, South Luzon Operation and Maintenance, San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna, Telefax No. 520-8213 and E-mail Address: (grlistano@transco.ph) upon presentation of Letter of Intent, original PCAB License and payment of a non-refundable fee of P600.00 per copy.

Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Eligibility Forms, documents and statements shall be on or before 10:00 A.M. of March 22, 2004 which shall be submitted at the office address mentioned above. Opening and Eligibility Screening shall be held on the same date and time specified. If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.

NTC reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.

Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communication should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address. *(Note: This invitation was based on Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).*

(Sgd.) G.R. LISTANO
Dept. Manager, PSMD-North and Chairman,
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–February 28, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
2004

February 20, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid of the following:

Name of Project	:	Comprehensive Maintenance Services for Servers and Peripherals
Location of the Project	:	RCC Bldg. & TIN Bldg., National Office Bldg. RDC-Quezon City, Manila, Makati & Cebu
Approved Budget	:	P6,886,056.00
Contract Duration	:	May 1 to December 31, 2004
Source of Funding	:	BIR's Appropriations

Name of Project	:	Repair of Videoconference Equipment
Location of the Project	:	BIR National Office Building
Approved Budget	:	P1,200,000.00
Contract Duration	:	Thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of Notice of Award
Source of Funding	:	BIR's Appropriations

All interested parties may get the bidding documents from the BAC Secretariat, c/o Procurement Division at Room 605, 6th Floor, BIR-NOB, Diliman, Quezon City starting **February 23, 2004**, upon payment of non-refundable fee of:

Project I - **P** 1,400.00
Project II - **P** 500.00

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **March 9, 2004 at 9:30 a.m. at the 3rd Floor, Executive Conference Room, BIR-NOB, Diliman, Quezon City.**

Deadline for the submission and opening of eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals shall be on **March 23, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the 3rd Floor, Executive Conference Room, BIR-NOB, Diliman, Quezon City**, and followed by the opening of the bids.

The criteria to be used by the BIR in the following: (a) eligibility check of prospective bidders; (b) examination and evaluation of bids; and (c) postqualification, shall be on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" basis.

The BIR assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any excuse or loss that they may incur in the preparation of their bid. The BIR also reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any of the required formality therein and accept the bids most advantageous to the government.

For particulars, please inquire from the BAC Secretariat, thru the Chief, Procurement Division at Room 605, 6th Floor, BIR-NOB, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone nos. 926-5547/926-5538 and 928-2026 (fax), or e-mail us at nelly.ibo@bir.gov.ph until **March 22, 2004.**

(Sgd.) **MILAGROS V. REGALADO**
Assistant Commissioner - Legal Service
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb. 28, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2003-135

PD Ref. No.: PB-040202-AA0022
PR No.: SCD-03-005067

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly license Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract provided, however, That Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of:
   Supply of Labor, Materials & Tools for General Overhauling of:
   Schedule I Compressor No. 1
   Schedule II Compressor No. 2
3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents to be issued to prospective bidders.
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is *P397,000.00* to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting February 27, 2004 to March 22, 2004 at The BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on March 11, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. at the Admin Conference Room, G/F TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before 10:00 a.m. of March 23, 2004 at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to be eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **A.G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - Feb. 28 & March 8, 2004)

MORE CLASSIFIEDS ON PAGE B4

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 • (632) 920-6446
E-mail: sssemail@info.com.ph • Web site http://www.sss.gov.ph

NOTICE

Please get in touch with the Members Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death benefit claim within 90 days upon publications, if you are:

	NAME OF BENEFICIARIES	LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	NAME OF SSS MEMBER	DATE OF DEMISE
1)	Freddie P. Abante	Unknown	Beatriz M. Abante SS # 03-2545565-7	September 13, 2000
2)	Lilia B. Abella	Unknown	Ignacio Abella, Jr. SS # 06-0222523-8	May 1, 2002
3)	Alicia Alcalde	Apalo Ragay, Camarines Sur	Abraham M. Alcalde SS # 03-6392242-7	January 11, 2000
4)	Rosalita Llevore	Escalante, Neg. Occ.	Manuel Aporador SS # 07-0364810-9	December 2, 2002
5)	Teresita, Nerissa & Jennefer Barrameda	Sumulong Hi-way, Mambugan, Antipolo City	Hermenegildo A. Barrameda SS # 03-9172678-3	August 28, 2003
6)	Theresa Britania	Unknown	Nicanor Britania SS # 07-0411619-4	September 21, 1999
7)	Benedicta Melag	555 E. Rodriguez Ext., Malibay, Pasay City	Matias B. Cassacia SS # 03-0746353-1	June 17, 2002
8)	Norma E. Concepcion	Unknown	Rogelio Concepcion SS # 03-1286006-0	November 15, 2003
9)	Shirley Corpuz	Sineguelasan, Bacoor, Cavite	Jose Corpuz SS # 03-3900918-3	November 29, 2003
10)	Julieta Abangan Decatoria	Bula, General Santos City	Phil Decatoria SS # 09-1402342-9	December 31, 2003
11)	Vergelio Delgado	Unknown	Vier Delgado SS # 06-1791821-3	July 13, 2001
12)	Rosalina Gacusan	Unknown	Benjamin B. Delos Reyes SS # 02-0122590-1	December 30, 2003
13)	Florencia Delos Reyes	#5095 Independence St., Gen. T. De Leon, Val. City	Hilario Dimacutac SS # 03-2840008-1	September 14, 2003
14)	Larena Suarte	Unknown	Danilo Juarte SS # 07-1079996-0	December 4, 2002
15)	Lorna Alvero Laude Annalyn De Castro Alvero	132 Columbia St., Provident Village, Marikina City	Oscar Oriel Laude SS # 03-6194220-5	July 23, 2000
16)	Florante S. Lazaga	Purok 8 Ph4 Blk 6 Brgy. Commonwealth, Q.C.	Suelma S. Lazaga SS # 02-0425310-3	September 30, 2003
17)	Edgardo S. Lim	51 B Banahaw St., Brgy. St. Martin de Porres, Q.C.	Jole S. Lobriges SS # 33-3267231-0	November 6, 2003
18)	Merlita C. Lope	Marikina	Mario T. Lope SS # 03-6808487-8	December 17, 2001
19)	Josefina Lucenas	Unknown	Eleuterio C. Lucenas SS # 08-0406611-1	June 28, 2003
20)	Elizabeth Figues	Unknown	Avelino G. Nava SS # 06-1609652-1	November 14, 2003
21)	Marife Mercado	Unknown	Ernesto Polane SS # 33-1793287-7	June 2, 2003
22)	Rowena Ramos Ronald Ramos	Sta. Catalina, Lubao, Pampanga	Rogelio G. Ramos SS # 02-0136755-5	August 11, 2001
23)	Estrella Enolla	Baliuag, Bulacan	Ernesto Rapsing SS # 03-2668719-4	December 9, 1999
24)	Myrna A. Ruiz	Unknown	Equicio G. Ruiz SS # 03-3774023-7	January 17, 2002
25)	Cristina Ina May	Unknown	Cesar S. Quintin SS # 03-2139721-4	December 11, 2002
26)	Lorna Floro	229 A. Mabini, Caloocan City	Benvenido Solanoy SS # 03-2707279-5	September 11, 2002
27)	Ester Tamayo Angelita Tamayo Alicia Tamayo Jose Ariel Tamayo	Unknown	Macario Tamayo SS # 08-0056866-7	January 5, 2000
28)	Roberto Torralba	Malasique, Pangasinan	Catalino Torralba SS # 03-1445356-3	October 17, 2003
29)	Nenita R. Verzosa	Bo. Mabini, Basey, Samar	Jose Verzosa SS # 06-0272292-2	April 14, 1990
30)	Clarita Babucan	Unknown	Melanio Villanueva SS # 07-0017878-2	October 28, 1992

– Nothing follows –

(PDI - Feb. 28, 2004)

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In Loving Memory
of our Dearly Beloved

DR. MARIA BAGO-LIM

**Retired Division Schools Superintendent
of Batangas Province**

**Born: July 28, 1918
Died: February 24, 2004**

Her Children and Children-in-law: **Dr. Cecilia L. Cayetano; Dr. Vedasto** and **Dr. Alicia Mangalindan-Lim; Dr. Eleazar** and **Dr. Alice Lopez-Lim**

Her Grandchildren: **Frankie** and **Gina; Maricel** and **Dick Angelia; Manuel Jr.** and **Charmaine; Babette** and **Russel Manguiat**, and **Michael**

Viviene and **Daniel Bombita; Ma. Veronica** and **Ramon Almeda; Vida Alicia** and **Victor Allan**

Elaine and **Manny Pina** and **Eleazar Jr.**

Her Great Grandchildren;

Her Brother, **Dr. Pedro Bago**; Sisters: **Lourdes Caringal** and **Daisy Estacio.**

In-laws, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Interment will be at the Ibaan, Batangas Municipal Cemetery on February 29, 2004, Sunday, after the 2 p.m. Mass at the Ibaan Catholic Church.

---

*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death
of His godly ones. (Ps. 116:15)*

BENSON TAM FOO

(May 30, 1953 - Februayr 24, 2004)

*Went home to be with his Father God in heaven of his Savior & Lord Christ Jesus
on Februay 24, 2004 at the age of 50.*

He will be missed by his loving wife **Kathy Chan Foo**; children **Earl, Kean, Bunny, Kim & Richard**; mother **Belen Foo**; brothers & in-laws: **Dickson & Susan Foo, Sammy & Teresa Foo**; sisters & in-laws: **Susan & Arturo Dy, Sukeen, Sabrina & Steward Ty**; his nephews & nieces.

The body of Benson Foo lies in state at The Lincoln Lodge, Olongapo City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 29, 2004 at 8:00 o'clock in the morning at the Olongapo Cemetery, Olongapo City.

Rom 8:38-39

Neither death nor life - nor any powers will be able to separate us from the love of God that it is in Christ Jesus our LORD.

JESUS SUNTAY BERNARDO

(Susing)

(June 12, 1917 - February 26, 2004)

His bereaved sister **Illuminada** (†), brother **Roman** (†) and **Sixto**, sisters-in-law **Benedicta** and **Encarnacion**, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 29, 2004 after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at St. Anne Church of Hagonoy, Bulacan.

GREGORIO VASALLO LISING, JR.

Peacefully joined our Lord on February 26, 2004 at the age of 69.

His beloved wife **Josie**; his children **Gerald, Gilbert, Jay, Gary, Jouela, Glenn**; children-in-laws, his grandchildren; his loving mother **Genoveva**; sister **Glory**; brother-in-law **Romy**; relatives and friends request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, March 2, 2004 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

Our Dearly Beloved Ma

Dolores Luzo Gomez

*Peacefully joined our Lord and her husband Domingo
on February 26, 2004 at the age of 92.*

Her children **EGAY, EVELYN, JUNE** and **GRACIAS**; grandchildren and great grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at her residence, from February 27-28, 2004 and will be transferred at the Arlington Memorial Chapel, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will take place on Tuesday, March 2, 2004 at the Loyola Memorial Park at 11:00 a.m. Mass at Arlington Memorial Chapels.

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to the eternal repose of*

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**Past President (1956-1959)
Member Emeritus
Great Marketer**

Our Dearly Beloved

"Mama" PAZ LEE ZARAGOZA

of San Fernando, Masbate

Has joined her Creator on February 27, 2004
at the age of 87.

She is survived by her loving children: Junior, Nene Lee, Be-ling, Dotoy, Baby Boy, Orville and Zanely; grandchildren, great-grandchildren, in-laws, loved ones and friends.

Her remains lie in state at the
Loyola Memorial Chapels in Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be on Tuesday, March 2, 2004
at 3:00 p.m. at the adjacent Loyola Memorial Park in
Sucat, Parañaque.

"The length of our days is seventy years – or eighty, if we have the strength ... " - Psalm 90:10

---

*Remember, man, as you pass by
What you are now, once was I
What I am now, once you will be
Remember, man, and pray for me.*

Leticia G. de Padua

October 21, 1930 - January 20, 2004

For all the prayers you offered, the flowers and messages of sympathy you sent, your presence in our moment of grief, and the countless ways in which you condoled with us.

Our heartfelt thanks.

David, Danny & Donna

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

JUANITA ILANO JAVIER

**118 Banalo Bacoor, Cavite
Died on January 30, 2004**

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who condoled with us, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, gave donations, attended the memorial services and interment, and in so many ways gave us peace and comfort.

Thank you!!!

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**
Assistant Editor **Stella O. Gonzales**

Detect lung cancer at earliest stage

Text and photo by Charles E. Buban

ONE OF THE MOST frustrating things for a doctor is to see a patient who has advanced-stage lung cancer.

"There's nothing much I can do about it because at this stage even chemotherapy works no more than 3 percent of the time, and survival is usually eight to nine months," says Dr. Sergio N. Andres Jr., a consultant at the Lung Center of the Philippines.

Of the patients who consult Andres, 95 percent (an average of three people each week) are already in this stage.

It is best to detect lung cancer at its earliest stage, when the malignant tumor is still in the lung and has not yet spread to the lymph nodes. The tumor can still be surgically removed.

But it is difficult to diagnose patients at this early stage because symptoms are often not pronounced enough for anyone to suspect cancer.

Lung cancer takes many years to develop.

Says Andres: "But changes in the lung can begin almost as soon as a person is exposed to cancer-causing substances. And if this person continues to be exposed to the substance, more abnormal cells will appear and these cells may be on their way to becoming cancerous and forming a tumor."

X-rays not foolproof

Andres says lung cancer will usually be suspected in a smoker who has a change in respiratory symptoms (like chronic coughing and shortness of breath), unexplained weight loss or bone pain.

"Apart from a physical exam and getting a patient's medical history, the doctor might also order a chest X-ray or specialized X-ray such as CT scan and bronchoscopy and a few other procedures to detect tumors," Andres says.

The doctor, however, warns that a chest X-ray is not foolproof because it may miss tumors in areas where there are other structures like the heart, ribs, diaphragm and artery.

ALTHOUGH IT is one of the basic diagnostic tests for lung cancer, a chest X-ray is not 100 percent reliable and will have to be supplemented by other tests.

Treatment options

Andres says a doctor takes many things into consideration in treating lung cancer. These include the patient's general health and the size, location and extent of the tumor.

"There are many treatments, which may be used alone or in combination, including surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy," says Andres.

Surgery is used in limited stages of the disease as some tumors cannot be removed because of their size or location.

Radiation therapy (using high energy X-ray that kills cancer cells) can be employed in combination with chemotherapy or surgery.

Chemotherapy, which necessitates the use of three to four drugs within three to four days of hospital confinement every 28 days for several months, can be physically and emotionally taxing for the patient.

"This is why family support as well as help from a professional support group is necessary during this period," Andres says.

The cost of chemotherapy may range from P60,000 to P200,000, depending on the condition of the disease and type of hospital.

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer in the Philippines, according to the Philippine Cancer Society.

"The surest way to defeat lung cancer is to prevent it from ever happening, and that is to stop smoking, the No. 1 cause of lung cancer," says Andres.

According to the PCS, a cigarette contains 2,000 different chemicals, including tar, which causes addiction, and nicotine.

Lung cancer and other tobacco-related diseases leave the government poorer by about P46 billion in economic and medical costs annually. They also kill 20,000 Filipinos each year.

Stress a little

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

STRESS is bad because it causes people to lose sleep.

According to a recent study by psychiatrist Martica Hall and her colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh, people who feel stressed wake up more often and don't sleep as deeply as others.

As reported in the January/February issue of the journal Psychosomatic Medicine, nearly 60 college students took part in the study which monitored their heart rates as they slept.

There are two general types of sleep: non-REM sleep, which covers everything from light dozes, where the sleeper awakens at the slightest sound or movement, to deep sleep, and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, where the sleeper dreams.

Before going to bed, half of the group was told they would be giving a 15-minute talk in the morning, with the topic assigned just before they would speak. Hall et al. found that the control group's heart rates were stable in both sleep phases, but the stressed group's heart rates varied as they dreamed. Perhaps they were worrying about what they would say during the lecture.

Interestingly, the researchers found that heart rates of insomniacs are similar to those of the stressed students, which suggests that the nervous system is equally affected.

Stress and illness

Stress is bad because it causes people to become ill. In the United Kingdom, employers lose nearly £4 billion annually from employees who, taken aback by their workloads, call in sick a total of 13 million work days.

In a study that appeared in this month's Heart and Circulatory Physiology of the American Physiological Society, researchers led by Angela Grippo from the University of Iowa established a link between people who are psychologically depressed and those with increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Because depression is known to be caused by stress, researchers used rats as a model organism to show how stress affects the animals' heart rhythms.

During the experiment, the control group of rats saw no changes in their lifestyle, their cages were cleaned regularly and they were left alone except for regular checkups.

The other group, however, was diagnosed as having chronic mild stress (CMS) after being exposed to stressful conditions such as constant light, dirty cages and noise. Depression was noted in these rats; they had lost interest in what used to be enjoyable activities (they weren't eating as much sucrose as the control group) and were less active than the control group.

The researchers concluded that the depressed rats had higher heart rates and were more susceptible to ventricular arrhythmias than the control group.

Good for immune system

Stress is good, however, because it can boost the immune system's ability to fight infections and speed up the healing process. This was the message Firdaus Dhabhar of Ohio State University brought before the American Academy of Dermatology annual meeting earlier this month.

Dhabhar, an associate professor of oral biology and molecular virology, immunology and medical genetics, has studied the effects of acute, short-term stress on rats and mice for the past decade.

Dhabhar found that rodents restrained for two hours and then treated with an antigen—something that makes the immune system create antibodies to fight the perceived invader—had a stronger immune response than rodents who weren't exposed to the stressful conditions. When the researchers exposed the stressed rodents to the same antigen several weeks later, the immune response was still stronger than the one generated by the control group.

Lessons

What have we learned? Learn to separate your work from your personal life. Get enough sleep. As one friend's e-mail signature says, "Don't sweat the petty things, and don't pet the sweaty things."

If you're going crazy trying to find the perfect gift for the woman who has everything, do not spend your life trying to raise enough money to afford the largest diamond in the universe, which by the way was recently discovered by the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. It happens to have 10 billion trillion trillion (that's the number 1 followed by 34 zeroes) carats and is currently located in the core of a white dwarf star 50 light years (multiply 50 by 6 trillion miles) from this planet.

Get her flowers instead or, if you're allergic to plants, a nice vase to put flowers in.

Series No. 1

(Beginning this Saturday, and every Saturday thereafter, Eli Lilly (Philippines), Inc. will be running a series of articles on Erectile Dysfunction, a treatable medical condition.)

Erectile Dysfunction and its causes

Sexual health is an important part of an individual's overall physical and emotional health. Erectile Dysfunction (ED), the inability to achieve a hard, erect penis sufficient for sexual intercourse, is one common complaint among men that affects their physical and emotional well-being.

Traditionally, this inability is called impotence. The term erectile dysfunction is more precise because it refers only to erection problems. Men with erection problems often retain other sexual functions. For example, they may still be able to have orgasm and ejaculate semen.

ED occurs when the blood flow to the penis is hindered significantly that the *corpus cavernosum* (erectile tissue of the penis) cannot be filled with blood. Because ED is the result of poor blood flow within the penis, it is often an indication of other more serious conditions such as vascular disease, diabetes and prostate cancer.

Erectile Dysfunction is the inability to achieve a hard, erect penis sufficient for sexual intercourse.

Erectile problems have more than one cause. The causes may be physical, psychological, or a combination of both.

Vascular (blood vessels) disease is the leading cause of ED. This includes arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), hypertension, hypercholesterolemia and other conditions which interfere with the blood flow to the penis.

Diseases that affect the nervous system, such as multiple sclerosis and alcoholism, can also cause erectile dysfunction. Some diseases associated with ED can affect both the vascular and nervous system. Diabetes is an example. A man with diabetes, for instance, may be a heavy smoker and a heavy drinker. He may have high blood pressure and a high level of cholesterol. Each of these conditions can damage the vascular system and/or nervous system. Each is a risk factor for erectile dysfunction. When any of these conditions occur together, the risk increases.

Substance abuse can also result in ED. The regular use of cocaine, marijuana, alcohol and steroids often results in ED. Use of these substances may also result in a decrease in the desire for sex. Excessive tobacco use can also contribute to ED.

Pelvic surgery may also result in erectile dysfunction. Surgical procedures involving the prostate gland, bladder or colon may interfere with the nerves involved in proper erections. Radiation therapy for cancer may also affect the erection process. Neurological diseases such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injuries, long-term effects of diabetes can also result in the disruption of the normal sequence of events necessary for an erection to occur properly.

Males exhibiting symptoms suggestive of erectile dysfunction are advised to see a doctor or a healthcare professional for proper diagnosis and appropriate treatment. ***(Next week, Diagnosing the causes of Erectile Dysfunction)***

(For more information, log on to www.lilly.com)

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Funny puzzlers

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

DUE TO POPULAR demand, I am giving another set of puzzles, this time with solutions attached. (If you want to try your hand at brainteasers, wait for my annual Christmas puzzle contest.) These puzzles are not only instructive, but they are also quite simple and very funny. Required are common sense, quick wit and logic—all of which are needed for math and for life.

For adults who claim they are too tired to think (much less solve puzzles), shame on you! My 5-year-old son tried his hand at these, and did quite well. I thank my husband Smith for forwarding these to me.

1. What do you put in a toaster?

Bread, of course. Not toast.

2. This is an exercise I usually do in my cognitive psychology class. Say "silk" five times. Then answer this question: What do cows drink?

Water, of course. Not milk.

3. If a red house is made from red bricks and a blue house is made from blue bricks and a pink house is made from pink bricks and a black house is made from black bricks, what is a greenhouse made from?

Glass, of course. Not green bricks.

Plane crash

4. This one appeared in Reader's Digest more than 20 years ago, before German unification: During a flight, two engines fail. Realizing that the last remaining engine is also failing, the pilot decides to do a crash landing. Unfortunately, the plane crashes in the middle of "no man's land" between East and West Germany. Where is the pilot supposed to bury the survivors? East Germany, West Germany or no man's land?

Survivors should not be buried at all.

5. If the hour hand on a clock moves 1/60 of a degree every minute, how many degrees will the hour hand move in one hour?

One degree. Not 360.

6. This is my son's favorite: You are driving a bus from Manila to Baguio. In the first stop, 17 people get on the bus. In the second stop, six people get off and nine people get on. In the third stop, two people get off and four get on. In the fourth stop, 11 people get off and 16 people get on. In the fifth stop, three people get off and five people get on. In the sixth stop, six people get off and three get on. You then arrive at Baguio. What was the name of the bus driver?

You, of course!

Math parody

Here is a recent piece of math parody circulating among aficionados. Various versions exist, but here is the best:

Hot off the wires: Stopping the Weapons of Math Destruction

At New York's Kennedy airport today, a person later discovered to be a public school teacher was arrested trying to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, a protractor, a setsquare, a slide rule and a calculator.

During a morning press conference, the attorney general said he believed the man was a member of the notorious al-gebra movement. He is being charged by the FBI with carrying weapons of math instruction.

"Al-gebra is a fearsome cult," he said. "They desire average solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on tangents in search of absolute value. They use secret code names like 'x' and 'y' and refer to themselves as unknowns, but we have determined that they belong to a common denominator of the axis of medieval with coordinates in every country."

"As the Greek philanderer Isosceles used to say, there are 3 sides to every triangle," he declared.

Math-dogs

When asked to comment on the arrest, President Bush said, "If God had wanted us to have better weapons of math instruction, He would have given us more fingers and toes."

"I am gratified that our government has given us a sine that it is intent on protracting us from these math-dogs who are willing to disintegrate us with calculus disregard. Murky statisticians love to inflict plane on every sphere of influence," the President said, adding: "Under the circumferences, we must differentiate their root, make our point, and draw the line."

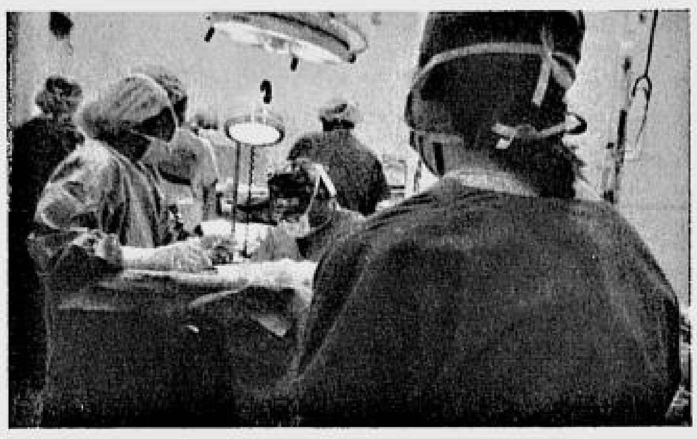
President Bush warned, "These weapons of math instruction have the potential to decimal everything in their math on a scalene never before seen unless we become exponents of a Higher Power and begin to factor-in random facts of vertex."

The Attorney General said, "As our Great Leader would say, read my ellipse. Here is one principle he is uncertain of: though they continue to multiply, their days are numbered as the hypotenuse tightens around their necks."

* * *

For readers demanding more information on math and Tolkien (see last week's column), go to www.suite101.com/article.cfm/tolkien/67459.

E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.



HOPE FOR KIDS WITH FACIAL DEFORMITIES. During missions of Operation Smile, local and international volunteers join forces to provide the best yet free reconstructive surgery to indigent children and young adults with cleft lips and palates and other facial deformities.

Int'l mission makes kids smile again

Text and photo by Charles E. Buban

We don't often see them in public. Their parents keep them at home, away from other people's disapproving stares or from those who might make fun of their condition.

Whatever the reason, a child born with a cleft lip or palate will soon grow up having low self-esteem and self-respect.

It was no wonder that when Operation Smile staged another international mission in Davao City, the parents of 5-month-old Christine Miroy traveled several kilometers from Butuan City to have their fourth child examined by a surgeon.

"I want my child to grow up like everybody else and this is my only chance to have her operated on for free since we have no money," Consolacion Miroy said in Cebuano.

Creating smiles

Most of the more than 300 children who went to the Davao Medical Center belong to low-income families who would not be able to shoulder the cost of a simple operation amounting to around P40,000.

"Together, we create smiles, changing the lives of these children who have facial deformities, and build public and private partnerships that advocate sustainable healthcare systems for these children and their families," said Operation Smile Philippines president Edith Yotoko-Villanueva.

Since 1982, Operation Smile has treated around 14,000 patients in the Philippines.

This year's mission started on Feb. 20 in the cities of Naga, Cebu and Davao.

Villanueva said over a hundred volunteers have participated in the missions. These are plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, pediatric intensivists, dentists and nurses, biomedical technicians including speech pathologists and child life specialists.

Three international medical missions were sponsored by OSP, its mother organization Operation Smile International based in Virginia, USA, and several corporations. Philippine Airlines transported the medical equipment to the mission sites and gave airfare discounts to the volunteers.

Host organizations, such as the Mariquita Salimbangon-Yeung Charitable Foundation in Cebu City, the Social Concern UCCP Foundation in Davao City and the city government of Naga mobilized hundreds of citizens to provide support to the medical teams.

Started in RP

Operation Smile was founded by plastic surgeon Dr. William Magee and his wife, Kathleen, a nurse and clinical social worker.

In 1982, the couple traveled to the Philippines with a group of medical volunteers to repair children's cleft lips and cleft palates and discovered hundreds of children ravaged by deformities.

Although they helped many children, the volunteers were forced to turn away the majority of those who sought help, and that was when Operation Smile was born.

Since then, Operation Smile has treated more than 55,000 children and young adults around the world, with the international mission now being held in about 30 countries.

Caring for the skin of a newborn

By Francisca C. Roa, MD, FPDS

How to take care of the skin of a newborn is often a dilemma of new mothers. The skin of a neonate (first 1 month of age) appears thin and delicate. During the first 1-2 weeks of life, the so-called physiologic loss of water in the skin (from a wet environment inside the womb to a dry external environment) makes it dry and peels off. This often causes alarm to mothers.

Skin thickness and epidermal barrier function of babies are actually mature by 32 weeks of gestation. By the time they are born, their skin is already capable to function as a barrier and thermoregulatory organ. The skin surface lipids of neonates are similar to those of adults although with an increased ratio of sebum lipids due to higher surface area. This increased ratio may play a role in the pathogenesis of neonatal acne. A premature infant however, may not have the capability and becomes more vulnerable to the elements of the environment and would require special care. There is significant transepidermal water loss (TEWL), thermal instability, susceptibility to infection due to a decrease of barrier function, thermal instability, and loss of fluids and electrolytes. Controlled environment is mandatory.

Using moisturizers and mild cleansing wash are therefore important in caring for the newborn skin. An ideal cleanser is something that could effectively clean the skin without inducing irritation and at the same time maintains hydration or moisturization. The pH value of normal skin is 4 to 5.5. Many claims have been made about the importance of using neutral or cationic cleansers to avoid interruption of epidermal barrier function and skin irritation. However, the pathogenesis of skin irritation is complex, and pH alone probably does not play the primary role.

"Soapless cleansers" are lotions that are primarily composed of either glycerin (Sorbolene cream wash, J&J; Celeteque, Adenphar), propylene glycol (Cetaphil, Galderma), ceramide (Ceraklin, Innoderm), or cetyl/steyl alcohols. They are hygroscopic (attracts water) lubricating agents that work by hydrating insoluble molecules. When rubbed on skin, they produce foam that can be wiped off, leaving a humectant residue effectively cleaning and moisturizing the skin. Propylene glycol also has antimicrobial properties.

A self-cleansing mechanism is inherent in skin, so daily bathing is more a pleasurable ritual than a necessity. Regional cleansing is necessary only in areas that accumulate waste and dirt. Bathing in tepid water can be helpful in controlling itchiness and increase hydration. Immediate application of emollients after bathing when the skin is damp is essential in maintaining skin hydration. Cornstarch added to water can also be soothing.

(Dr. Francisca C. Roa is the current president of the Philippine Dermatological Society. She is an Associate Professor of the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital.)

NEW!
Johnson's baby
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CLINICALLY MILDNESS PROVEN
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From the recognized and trusted worldwide leader in babycare - Johnson's Baby - comes another innovation that seeks to relieve newborn babies of the discomforts brought about by dry, sensitive skin: **Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash.**

It's a highly moisturizing cream wash that is both mild and soap-free/non-drying. This means that it not only helps revitalize dry or damaged skin, but it also makes sure that moisture is retained after washing.

Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash is also fragrance-free and has no antiseptic. (Antiseptic has been found to have a tendency of further drying the skin.) And, of course, being Johnson's Baby, it's Clinically Proven Mild® so you can be sure that it's safe to use even on the most delicate skin of a newborn baby.

Over and above this, Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash outperforms its current competitors in terms of skin moisturization & moisture-retention based on technical studies conducted using lab instruments that measures skin moisture levels. In addition, an in-use test supervised by medical professionals was conducted among babies with dry skin. Date showed that Sorbolene received a 91% satisfaction rating from mothers who had tried it on their babies, while 96% of pediatricians who had initially tested the product claimed they would recommend it to their patients.

In terms of price, Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash is just half the price of the leading competitor brand. At Php 70.85 SRP, Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash is a very affordable product that will allow the vast majority of mothers to relieve their newborn babies of the discomfort and pain brought about by dry, sensitive skin.

Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash is available at your local Mercury Drug Store, Watson's and other leading drug stores in your area.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Don't be the next victim of killer syndrome

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

VICTIM No. 1: Ricardo B., 54, insurance manager; had no symptoms and could still play 18 holes of golf; just slightly overweight; with borderline blood pressure (BP) and blood sugar; low high-density lipoprotein (HDL, or good cholesterol) and elevated triglycerides; suffered a heart attack; fortunately survived.

Victim No. 2: Elvira F., 59, housewife; had no symptoms; 30 pounds overweight; with slightly elevated BP; normal fasting blood sugar but markedly elevated when checked two hours after eating a regular meal; low HDL; admitted to the hospital a few weeks ago for paralysis of the right half of the body, slurring and inability to swallow food; now undergoing rehabilitation therapy and is being fed through a naso-gastric tube.

Victim No. 3: Lisandro M., 43, entrepreneur; sedentary with hardly any exercise; grossly obese, hypertensive, diabetic; with elevated low density lipoprotein (LDL, or bad cholesterol), low HDL and high triglycerides; suddenly collapsed during an office meeting; pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital ER.

Syndrome X

These three people were unknowing victims of a killer syndrome which is fast developing into an epidemic in Asia. It is such a low-key syndrome that many people, including physicians, are not even aware it exists. Majority of patients may have no bothersome symptoms that would compel them to seek medical advice. In some instances, their first attack would be their last.

The National Cholesterol Education Program in the United States defines metabolic syndrome, or syndrome X, as any three of the following: abdominal obesity or having an "apple shape" wherein the waist is bigger than the hips, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, low good cholesterol, and high triglycerides.

People with metabolic syndrome are three times more at risk of developing cardiovascular disease and its complications compared to those without it.

Recent data from the National Health Survey showed that 14-20 percent of Filipinos above 20 years old have metabolic syndrome. Dr. Rody Sy, president of the Asia Pacific Society of Atherosclerosis and Vascular Diseases, also cited data showing a higher prevalence of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome among Filipino-American women compared to Caucasian women. It showed that metabolic syndrome was present in 34 percent of the Filipino women compared to just 13 percent in Caucasian subjects.

"Asians are also more prone to having high levels of 'bad cholesterol' and low levels of 'good cholesterol' compared with their western counterparts," Dr. Sy said. "There is therefore a very urgent need to combat the increasing prevalence of metabolic syndrome in the Asian region before it becomes another epidemic."

Insulin resistance

According to Dr. Ricardo Fernando, founding president of the Institute for the Study of Diabetes Foundation, insulin resistance is a basic mechanism causing the adverse effects of metabolic syndrome.

Insulin helps the metabolism of sugar and carbohydrates.

Dr. Fernando explained that Asians appear to have a relatively higher fasting sugar and elevated insulin levels, which suggests insulin resistance.

Increased insulin, or hyperinsulinemia, with resulting insulin resistance is reported to have an unfavorable effect on the cardiovascular system, specifically on the blood vessels, making them less flexible and more prone to progressive narrowing known as atherosclerosis.

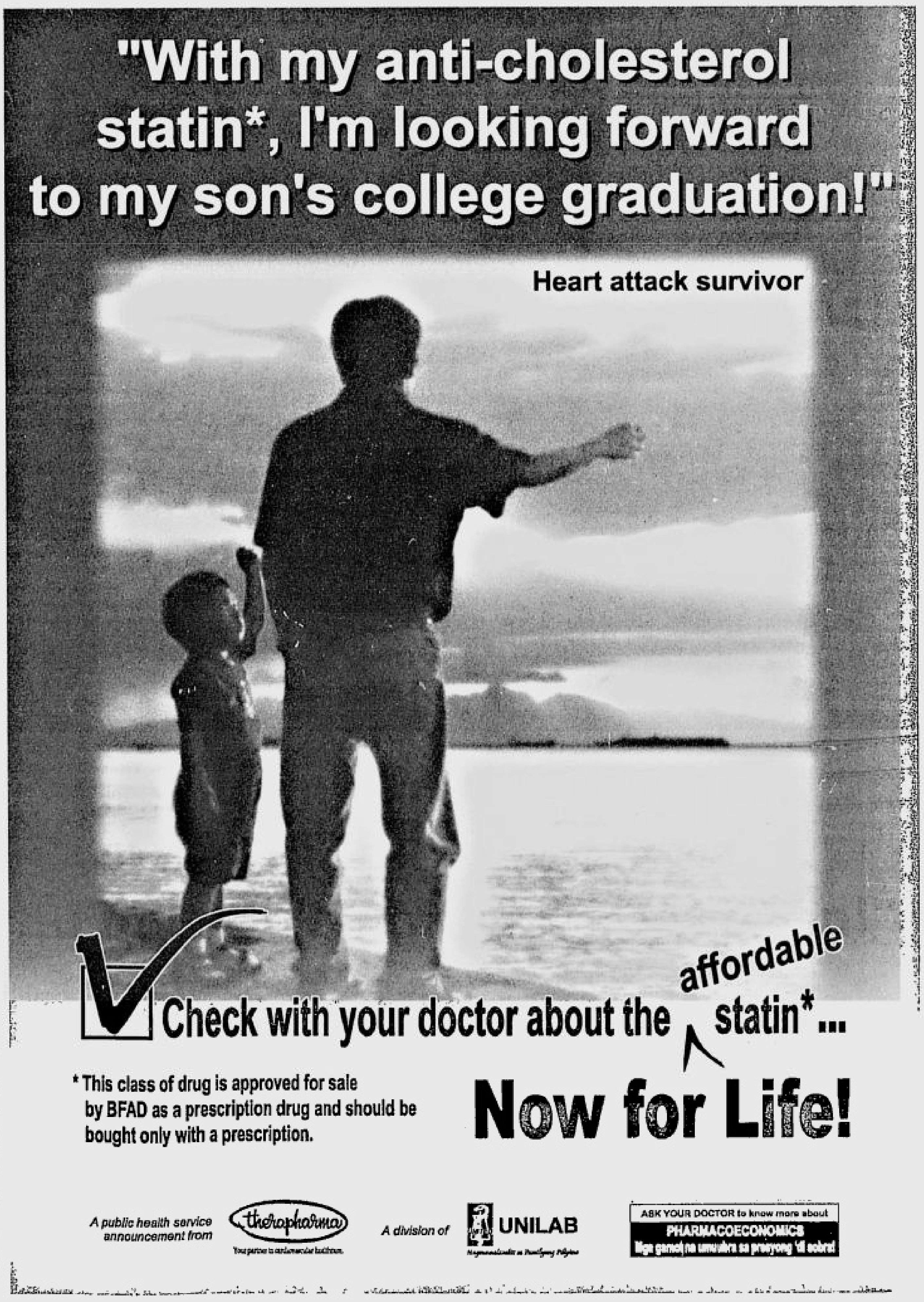
People with metabolic syndrome are therefore at a higher risk of coronary heart disease and cardiovascular death.

Disseminating info

As part of a worldwide project to develop and disseminate knowledge about metabolic syndrome to health professionals, the Metabolic Syndrome Institute has been created. It is a scientific committee made up of 12 specialists in the field of lipidology, cardiology, diabetology, endocrinology and genetics. It is headed by Dr. Philip Barter, director of the National Heart Foundation of Australia.

In the Philippines, the Metabolic Syndrome Project was launched by Laboratoires Fournier Philippines during the recent convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and Philippine Lipid Society (PLS). Laboratoires Fournier Philippines will support a PLS study on the prevalence of metabolic syndrome among young adults.

MetS insights, a magazine for physicians devoted to metabolic syndrome, was also launched as part of the project.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HOPE FOR KIDS WITH FACIAL DEFORMITIES. During missions of Operation Smile, local and international volunteers join forces to provide the best yet free reconstructive surgery to indigent children and young adults with cleft lips and palates and other facial deformities.

Int'l mission makes kids smile again

Text and photo by Charles E. Buban

We don't often see them in public. Their parents keep them at home, away from other people's disapproving stares or from those who might make fun of their condition.

Whatever the reason, a child born with a cleft lip or palate will soon grow up having low self-esteem and self-respect.

It was no wonder that when Operation Smile staged another international mission in Davao City, the parents of 5-month-old Christine Miroy traveled several kilometers from Butuan City to have their fourth child examined by a surgeon.

"I want my child to grow up like everybody else and this is my only chance to have her operated on for free since we have no money," Consolacion Miroy said in Cebuano.

Creating smiles

Most of the more than 300 children who went to the Davao Medical Center belong to low-income families who would not be able to shoulder the cost of a simple operation amounting to around P40,000.

"Together, we create smiles, changing the lives of these children who have facial deformities, and build public and private partnerships that advocate sustainable healthcare systems for these children and their families," said Operation Smile Philippines president Edith Yotoko-Villanueva.

Since 1982, Operation Smile has treated around 14,000 patients in the Philippines.

This year's mission started on Feb. 20 in the cities of Naga, Cebu and Davao.

Villanueva said over a hundred volunteers have participated in the missions. These are plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, pediatric intensivists, dentists and nurses, biomedical technicians including speech pathologists and child life specialists.

Three international medical missions were sponsored by OSP, its mother organization Operation Smile International based in Virginia, USA, and several corporations. Philippine Airlines transported the medical equipment to the mission sites and gave airfare discounts to the volunteers.

Host organizations, such as the Mariquita Salimbangon-Yeung Charitable Foundation in Cebu City, the Social Concern UCCP Foundation in Davao City and the city government of Naga mobilized hundreds of citizens to provide support to the medical teams.

Started in RP

Operation Smile was founded by plastic surgeon Dr. William Magee and his wife, Kathleen, a nurse and clinical social worker.

In 1982, the couple traveled to the Philippines with a group of medical volunteers to repair children's cleft lips and cleft palates and discovered hundreds of children ravaged by deformities.

Although they helped many children, the volunteers were forced to turn away the majority of those who sought help, and that was when Operation Smile was born.

Since then, Operation Smile has treated more than 55,000 children and young adults around the world, with the international mission now being held in about 30 countries.

Caring for the skin of a newborn

By Francisca C. Roa, MD, FPDS

How to take care of the skin of a newborn is often a dilemma of new mothers. The skin of a neonate (first 1 month of age) appears thin and delicate. During the first 1-2 weeks of life, the so-called physiologic loss of water in the skin (from a wet environment inside the womb to a dry external environment) makes it dry and peels off. This often causes alarm to mothers.

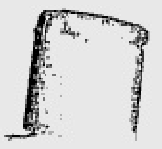
Skin thickness and epidermal barrier function of babies are actually mature by 32 weeks of gestation. By the time they are born, their skin is already capable to function as a barrier and thermoregulatory organ. The skin surface lipids of neonates are similar to those of adults although with an increased ratio of sebum lipids due to higher surface area. This increased ratio may play a role in the pathogenesis of neonatal acne. A premature infant however, may not have the capability and becomes more vulnerable to the elements of the environment and would require special care. There is significant transepidermal water loss (TEWL), thermal instability, susceptibility to infection due to a decrease of barrier function, thermal instability, and loss of fluids and electrolytes. Controlled environment is mandatory.

Using moisturizers and mild cleansing wash are therefore important in caring for the newborn skin. An ideal cleanser is something that could effectively clean the skin without inducing irritation and at the same time maintains hydration or moisturization. The pH value of normal skin is 4 to 5.5. Many claims have been made about the importance of using neutral or cationic cleansers to avoid interruption of epidermal barrier function and skin irritation. However, the pathogenesis of skin irritation is complex, and pH alone probably does not play the primary role.

"Soapless cleansers" are lotions that are primarily composed of either glycerin (Sorbolene cream wash, J&J; Celeteque, Adenphar), propylene glycol (Cetaphil, Galderma), ceramide (Ceraklin, Innoderm), or cetyl/steyl alcohols. They are hygroscopic (attracts water) lubricating agents that work by hydrating insoluble molecules. When rubbed on skin, they produce foam that can be wiped off, leaving a humectant residue effectively cleaning and moisturizing the skin. Propylene glycol also has antimicrobial properties.

A self-cleansing mechanism is inherent in skin, so daily bathing is more a pleasurable ritual than a necessity. Regional cleansing is necessary only in areas that accumulate waste and dirt. Bathing in tepid water can be helpful in controlling itchiness and increase hydration. Immediate application of emollients after bathing when the skin is damp is essential in maintaining skin hydration. Cornstarch added to water can also be soothing.

(Dr. Francisca C. Roa is the current president of the Philippine Dermatological Society. She is an Associate Professor of the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital.)



From the recognized and trusted worldwide leader in babycare - Johnson's Baby - comes another innovation that seeks to relieve newborn babies of the discomforts brought about by dry, sensitive skin: **Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash.**

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It's a highly moisturizing cream wash that is both mild and soap-free/non-drying. This means that it not only helps revitalize dry or damaged skin, but it also makes sure that moisture is retained after washing.

Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash is also fragrance-free and has no antiseptic. (Antiseptic has been found to have a tendency of further drying the skin.) And, of course, being Johnson's Baby, it's Clinically Proven Mild® so you can be sure that it's safe to use even on the most delicate skin of a newborn baby.

Over and above this, Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash outperforms its current competitors in terms of skin moisturization & moisture-retention based on technical studies conducted using lab instruments that measures skin moisture levels. In addition, an in-use test supervised by medical professionals was conducted among babies with dry skin. Date showed that Sorbolene received a 91% satisfaction rating from mothers who had tried it on their babies, while 96% of pediatricians who had initially tested the product claimed they would recommend it to their patients.

In terms of price, Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash is just half the price of the leading competitor brand. At Php 70.85 SRP, Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash is a very affordable product that will allow the vast majority of mothers to relieve their newborn babies of the discomfort and pain brought about by dry, sensitive skin.

Johnson's Baby Sorbolene Cream Wash is available at your local Mercury Drug Store, Watson's and other leading drug stores in your area.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Don't be the next victim of killer syndrome

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

VICTIM No. 1: Ricardo B., 54, insurance manager; had no symptoms and could still play 18 holes of golf; just slightly overweight; with borderline blood pressure (BP) and blood sugar; low high-density lipoprotein (HDL, or good cholesterol) and elevated triglycerides; suffered a heart attack; fortunately survived.

Victim No. 2: Elvira F., 59, housewife; had no symptoms; 30 pounds overweight; with slightly elevated BP; normal fasting blood sugar but markedly elevated when checked two hours after eating a regular meal; low HDL; admitted to the hospital a few weeks ago for paralysis of the right half of the body, slurring and inability to swallow food; now undergoing rehabilitation therapy and is being fed through a naso-gastric tube.

Victim No. 3: Lisandro M., 43, entrepreneur; sedentary with hardly any exercise; grossly obese, hypertensive, diabetic; with elevated low density lipoprotein (LDL, or bad cholesterol), low HDL and high triglycerides; suddenly collapsed during an office meeting; pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital ER.

Syndrome X

These three people were unknowing victims of a killer syndrome which is fast developing into an epidemic in Asia. It is such a low-key syndrome that many people, including physicians, are not even aware it exists. Majority of patients may have no bothersome symptoms that would compel them to seek medical advice. In some instances, their first attack would be their last.

The National Cholesterol Education Program in the United States defines metabolic syndrome, or syndrome X, as any three of the following: abdominal obesity or having an "apple shape" wherein the waist is bigger than the hips, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, low good cholesterol, and high triglycerides.

People with metabolic syndrome are three times more at risk of developing cardiovascular disease and its complications compared to those without it.

Recent data from the National Health Survey showed that 14-20 percent of Filipinos above 20 years old have metabolic syndrome. Dr. Rody Sy, president of the Asia Pacific Society of Atherosclerosis and Vascular Diseases, also cited data showing a higher prevalence of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome among Filipino-American women compared to Caucasian women. It showed that metabolic syndrome was present in 34 percent of the Filipino women compared to just 13 percent in Caucasian subjects.

"Asians are also more prone to having high levels of 'bad cholesterol' and low levels of 'good cholesterol' compared with their western counterparts," Dr. Sy said. "There is therefore a very urgent need to combat the increasing prevalence of metabolic syndrome in the Asian region before it becomes another epidemic."

Insulin resistance

According to Dr. Ricardo Fernando, founding president of the Institute for the Study of Diabetes Foundation, insulin resistance is a basic mechanism causing the adverse effects of metabolic syndrome.

Insulin helps the metabolism of sugar and carbohydrates.

Dr. Fernando explained that Asians appear to have a relatively higher fasting sugar and elevated insulin levels, which suggests insulin resistance.

Increased insulin, or hyperinsulinemia, with resulting insulin resistance is reported to have an unfavorable effect on the cardiovascular system, specifically on the blood vessels, making them less flexible and more prone to progressive narrowing known as atherosclerosis.

People with metabolic syndrome are therefore at a higher risk of coronary heart disease and cardiovascular death.

Disseminating info

As part of a worldwide project to develop and disseminate knowledge about metabolic syndrome to health professionals, the Metabolic Syndrome Institute has been created. It is a scientific committee made up of 12 specialists in the field of lipidology, cardiology, diabetology, endocrinology and genetics. It is headed by Dr. Philip Barter, director of the National Heart Foundation of Australia.

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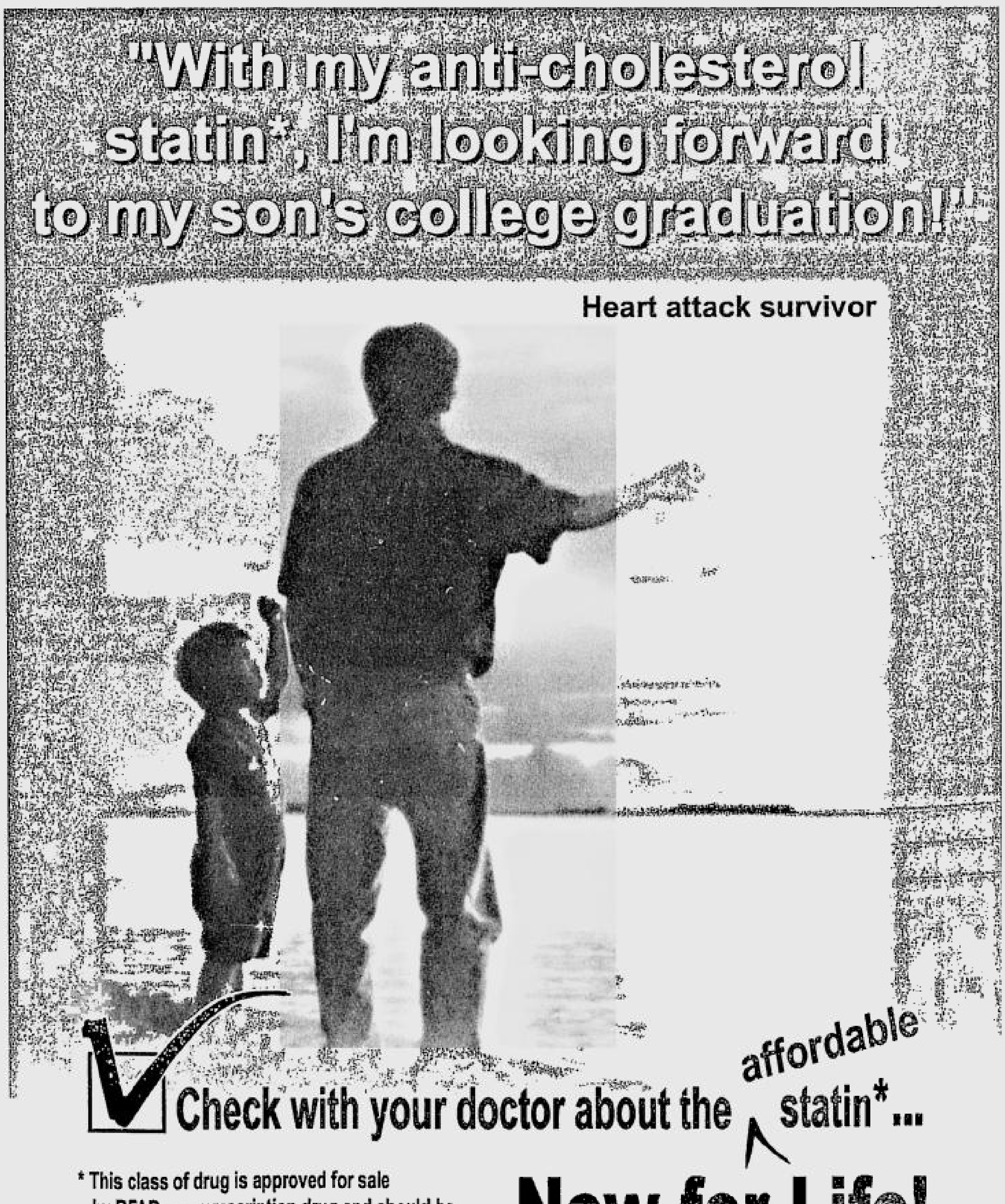

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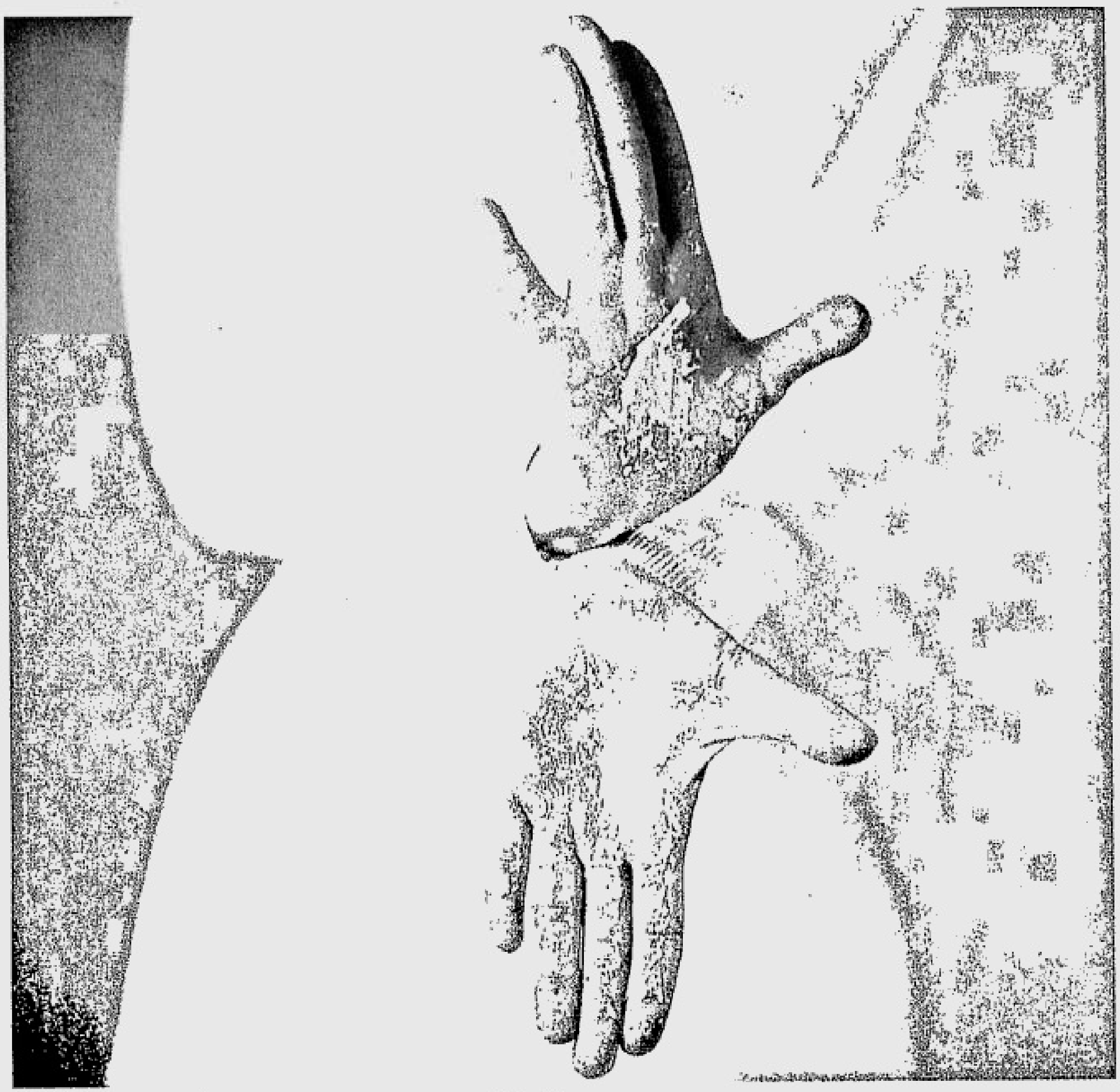

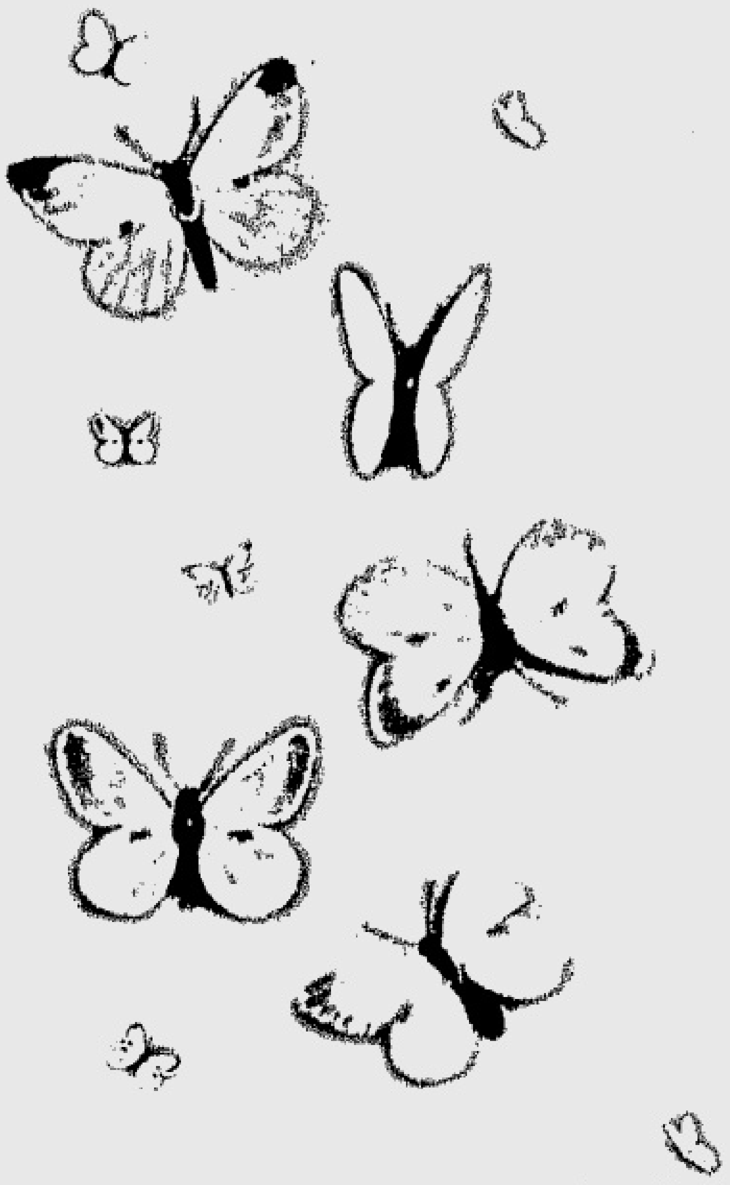

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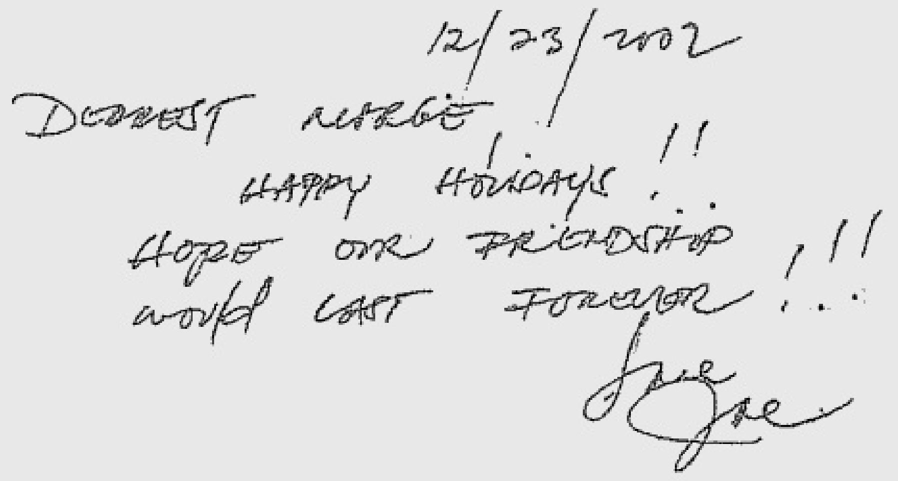

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DEAREST MARGE,
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!
HOPE OUR FRIENDSHIP
WOULD LAST FOREVER!!!
Love
Joe

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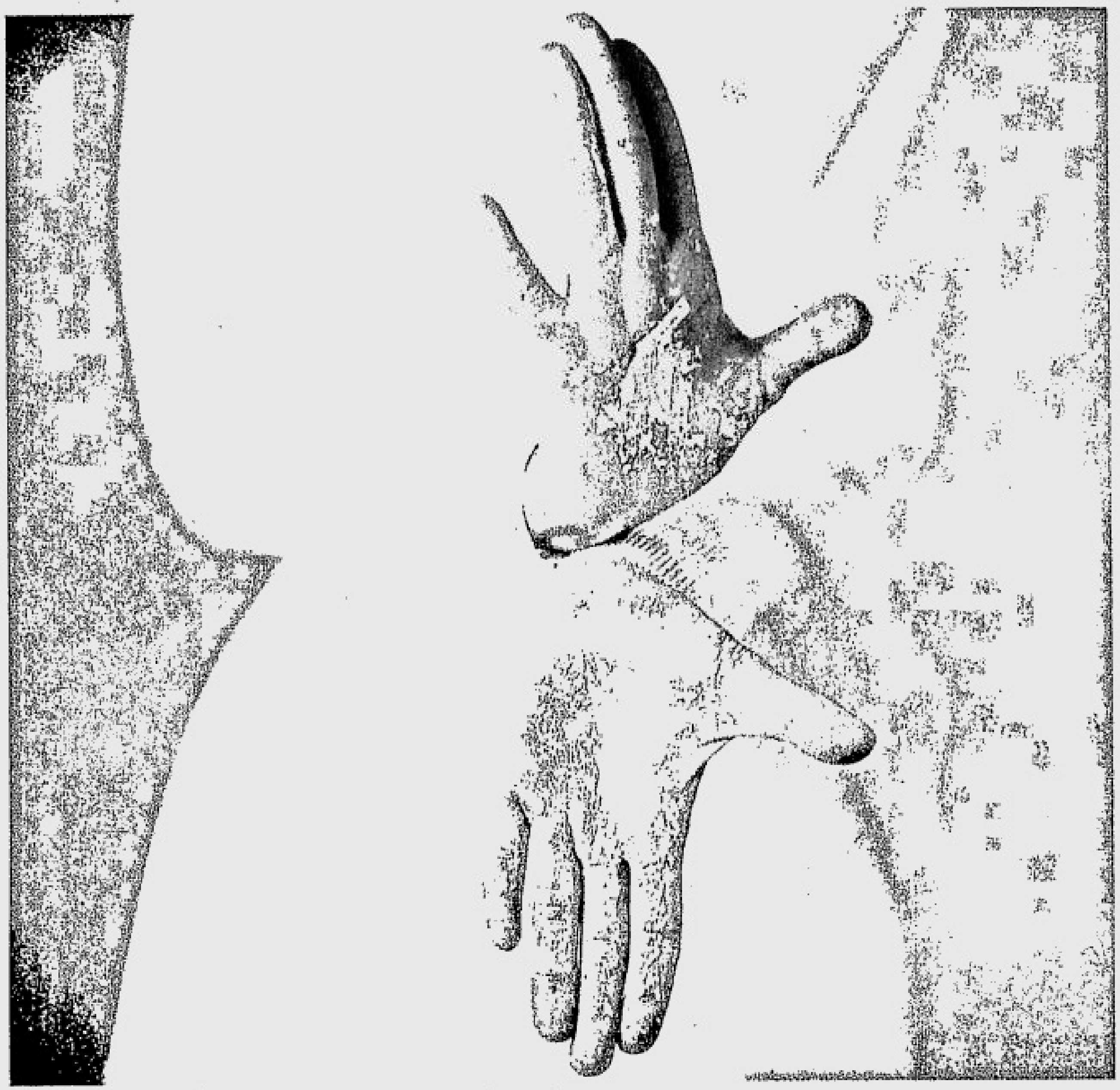

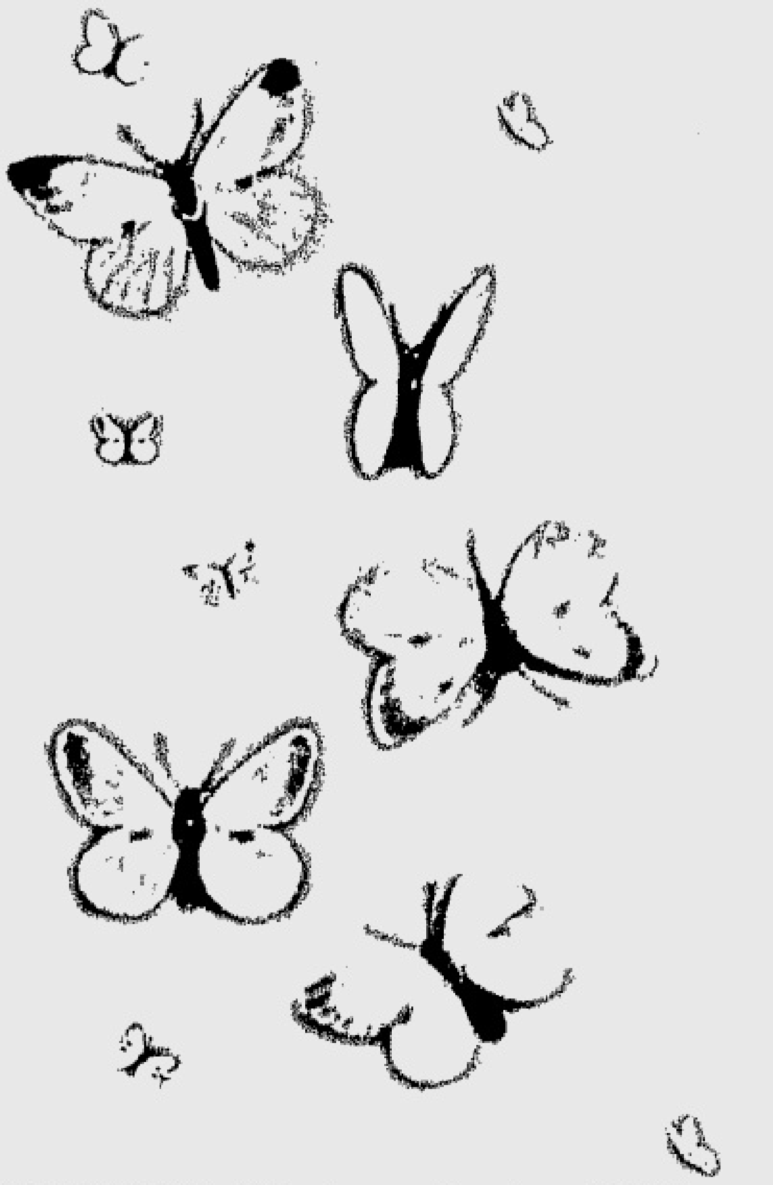

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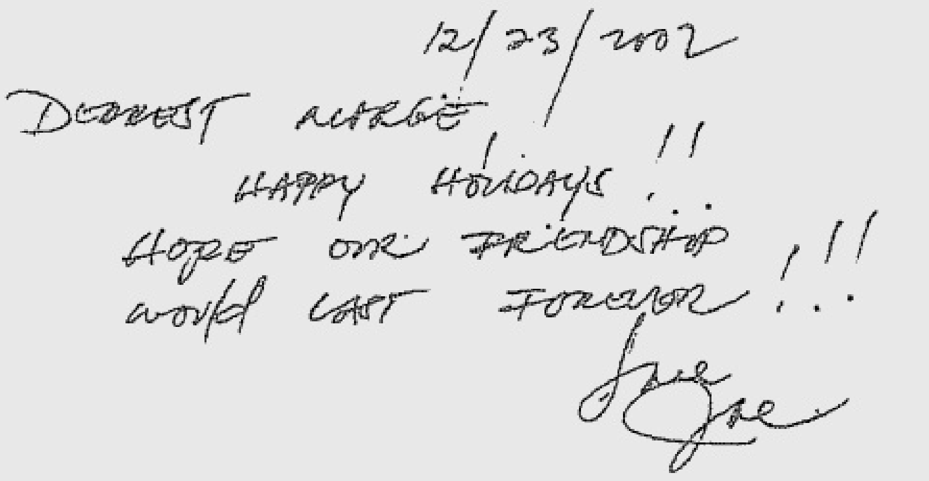

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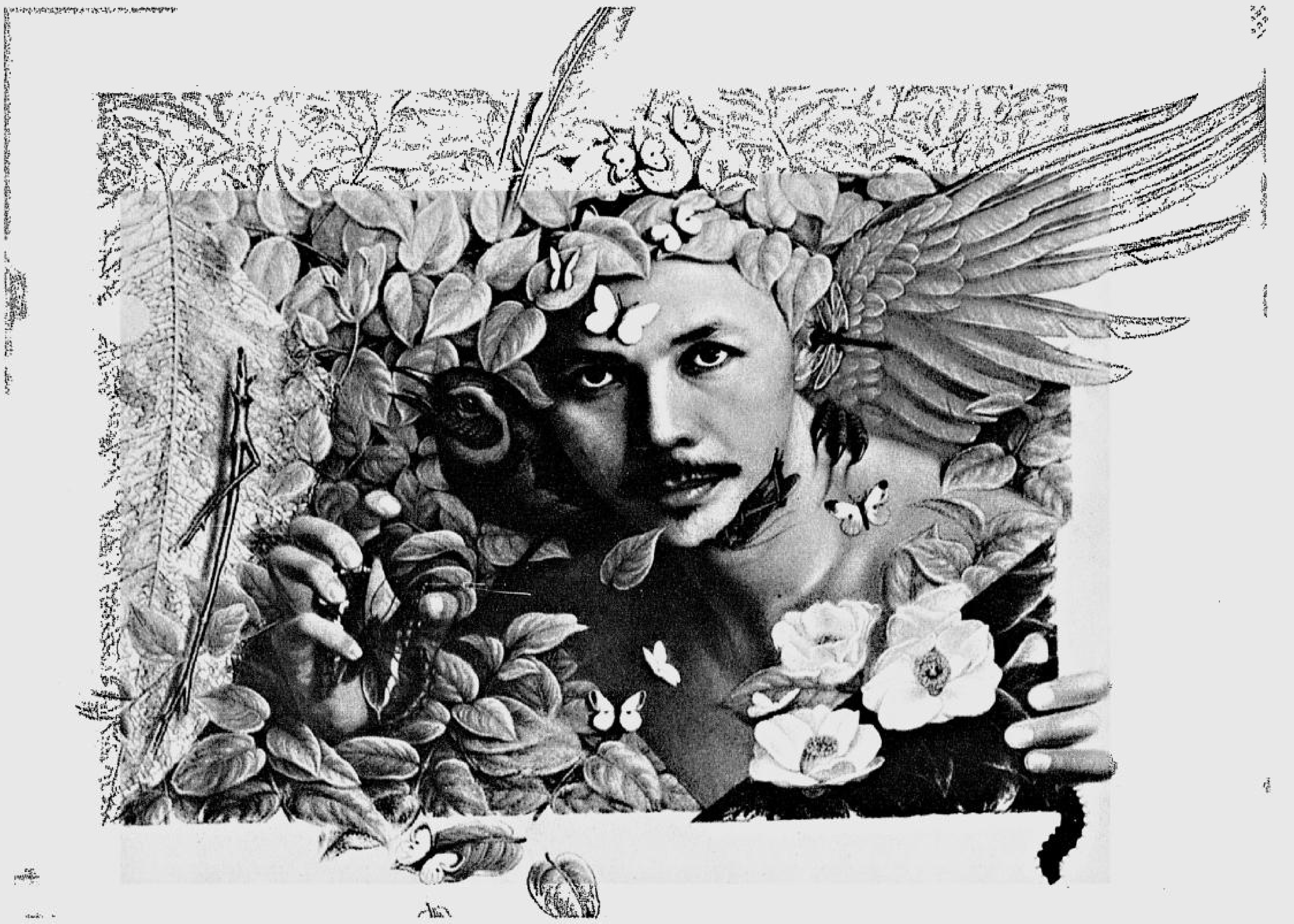
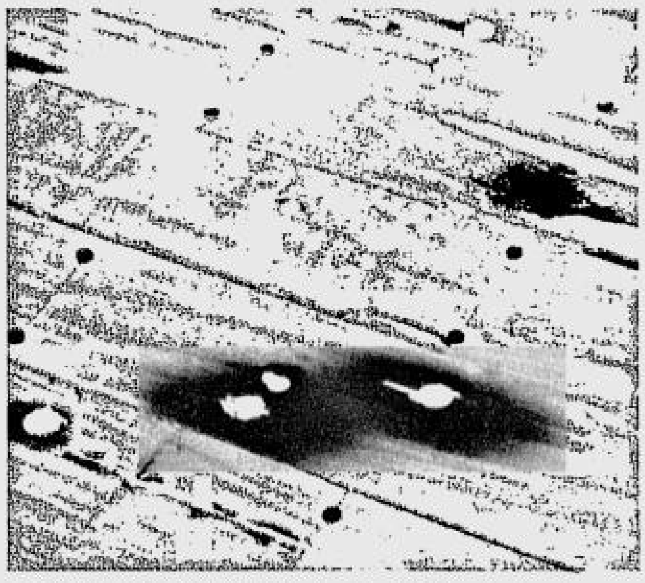


STORY OF JOE. US-based artist Pablo Orendain's 1988 portrait of Salazar illustrates the subject's transformation from awkward (caterpillar) to fabulous (butterflies). The insect on his throat could have been a warning. He died of throat cancer.

Glimpses of an artist's truths

Designer Joe Salazar passed on what came to him from the depths

By Marge C. Enriquez
Photos by Patrick Uy



CONVERSATION PIECE. The flooring in Salazar's shop is made of *molave* planks, tainted with biomorphic shapes. Epoxy glue covers the gaps to create interesting highlights.

DETAIL of the wooden pedestal top. The deeply sensual and earthy nature of Salazar was reflected in his choice of materials.

TREE trunk turned into a pedestal with a cavity made of mother-of-pearl inlay, for Salazar's calling cards.

THE LATE afternoon shadows on Jose B. Salazar's garden terrace made us aware that another day had almost passed, just like his illustrious career. The leaves of *balete* trees—still green—had fallen, forming a thick carpet over the precious *piedra china* and pebble-washed flooring. Like magic, the gardener in Salazar had created an oasis in the urban mess that is Manila. Lush clusters of ferns sprouted from the ground. Mango trees, bamboos, palms, Birds of Paradise and other tropical plants were at the peak of maturation, on the cusp of decay.

The state of the garden was a metaphor for the gardener's end. At the ripeness of his hard work, Joe extracted the totality of what he had learned; in his final months, he compressed the inner truth from his discoveries.

The parakeets in the aviary continued to chirp, as did the sparrows flying about. Giant kois in the fishpond swam peacefully, unmindful of their sanctuary's future. Water gushed from bamboo poles, creating a hypnotic effect. They all seemed to say that the passing of their master was no reason for melancholy.

Visual pegs

Inside the house, classical music wafted from Joe's bedroom. The man who dressed up Manila's most glamorous women had lived very simply. For two years, he slept in a hospital bed set up in his room, and had to be fed intravenously. Now the dim room was lit only by two side table lamps. There was no air of sorrow, because in his final hours, Joe was remembering his original nature of peace. He was 59.

While waiting for photographer Patrick Uy and his wife Evelyn, a maid sat on a chair in the work room, dazed from the loss of her employer. In a corner were boxes of trimmings and beads, Chinese embroideries of parrots, flowers and trees, stacks of European fashion magazines, and books on English royalty, biographies, angels, and garden design. Magazine clippings and illustrations for clients were tacked on white boards. On one of the boards were Salazar's illustrations for the gowns of Mons Tantoco, Lucy Gomez, Tina Ocampo, and Irene Araneta. A bright red swatch and a photo of a hand holding flowers were pinned on top of the drawing for Bea Zobel Jr. On the racks hung Cacai Arroyo's wedding gown and formals that the designer had made for INQUIRER pictorials. There were two rows of coffee-table books with markers on some pages that served as his references. Salazar did not plagiarize; he used visual pegs.

In "Turn of the Century," he had marked the pages that showed an American wearing a *mestiza* dress in 1901 and Art Nouveau glass window motifs. In a couture book, he picked out references to Halston, Patou, St. Laurent and Chanel, whose designs purveyed opulence and escapism. In the Balenciaga book, he listed the pages of Goya's portraits of a Marquesa and "La Solana" that became inspirations for his ballgowns.

Salazar was greatly influenced by the romance of Dior, the curvaceous simplicity of Balenciaga, the sculptural touch of Roberto Capucci and the embroiderers of his native Batangas. When Imelda Marcos lent Salazar her couture gowns for him to study, he imbibed Valentino's trademarks—columnar lines, clusters of feathers, appliquéd flowers, blingblings, petalled fabrics and elaborate needlework —and made them his own.

Thus, in a lifestyle of branding and generic ready-to-wear, Salazar persisted in keeping the flame of fashion artistry alive. He became synonymous with tradition and ultra-femininity—swishing layers of chiffon, generous bows, jutting ruffles, variations of drapes, body-hugging ruches, billowy electric pleats, horsehair and crystals. Although these made the clothes showstoppers, they were merely supporting elements to the designer's overall vision. At the core was intricate construction, the way the fabric molded body, how the design reflected the wearer's personality and his soul. His work was an embodiment of art from the heart.

Later on, Salazar experimented with deconstruction, exposing the structure of the *terno* for a Miss Universe contestant. He irreverently mixed the *terno* top with a farthingale that revealed the candidate's legs. It was a glimpse of his bawdy humor, known only to close friends until then.

Life at 50

For Salazar, life began at 50, when he achieved mastery of his craft. He could confidently execute any design ranging from the extravagant to the architectural to the monastic because of his endless experimenting. I once told him how much I envied a mutual friend who basked in the luxuries of leisure and travel. His reply was one of the wittiest that I remember. He quipped in Tagalog: "If, like him, we didn't work, we would never develop our talents to their full capacity."

I came to appreciate Salazar's work when he started making collections for the INQUIRER upon the prodding of former designer Ramon Bilbao. In 1999, Salazar and his longtime best friend Rusty Lopez joined a pictorial where the models wore evening formals while doing household chores. The next project was a group fashion show aboard the MRT train, for which Salazar created sheaths embossed with ultra-fine beadwork.

Salazar's first exclusive collection pictorial after a long time appeared in April 2000. Some of them, including the memorable strapless taffeta gown with a crushed bodice and panniered and draped skirt, were eventually photographed again in magazines. His skin-tight, black tulle top, encrusted with a galaxy of beadwork, was later worn by Kris Aquino for the cover of Philippine Tatler.

My favorite was his take on the Filipiniana. He exposed the shoulders and used the scalloped edges of the lace top to replicate the curves of the traditional butterfly sleeves. For added drama, he wound circles of ribbons on the bodice and on one sleeve. True to the Filipiniana costume, it was coordinated with draped skirt with a *serpentina* hem. Clients got excited upon seeing those gowns. He received many orders.

Salazar had a little quirk, though. He was offended that his name had not appeared on the headline. I kept that in mind for his next shoot, which appeared in July 2000. Lito Zulueta at the copy desk gave it the title "Meet Joe Precious." Fascinated by the children's story of "The Caterpillar and the Butterfly," I had asked Joe to make a butterfly collection. Fashion designers pointed out the fastidiousness of the patchwork butterfly on the black tulle top with cascading layers of soft, bias-cut fabric for a fluttery effect. The handiwork was made of horsehair and nylon that folded into a bow, and feathers. The top was embellished with pointillist beadwork. I told him it was a metaphor for his own transformation; this resonated quite well with him.

Over the top

Like the caterpillar who spun himself into a cocoon and finally emerged as a butterfly, Salazar went through stages. His artistry did not happen overnight. Glenda Martinez-Castillo once showed me the gowns that Salazar made for her mother and sister in the late 1970s and '80s. The construction was basically A-line, the materials were inexpensive, but the embroidery and beadwork were already impeccable.

When Salazar started making gowns for Imelda Marcos, his adornments became excessive, reflecting the decadence of the regime. For a shoot on vintage clothing that we once did, Mary Ann Tinio showed us the formals he made for her mother and former Blue Lady Yasmin Cuenca. One was an A-line gown fully embellished with pastel floral beadwork. On a hanger, it looked like an over-decked wedding cake. Salazar was an architect; his clothes were better worn than hung. On Tinio, the gown suddenly had allure, and from a distance, the beadwork looked like prints that were organic to the fabric. Ditto with a hot pink *terno*, covered with petalled organza, that could

EMERGING FROM THE COCOON. Butterfly gown made of soft chiffon and tulle, accentuated with hand-made accoutrements in horsehair, nylon and his signature pointillist beadwork. A shroud adds mystery. WAHOO GUERRERO

JOE'S LAST HURRAH. Bride Michelle Santos (now Mrs. Alvin Lin) in a princess-cut silk taffetta gown with subtle beadwork using Swarovski crystals and turnazul beads. Bride's mom, Therese, wears a Thai silk sheath with asymmetric neckline and trace beadwork.

JOJO Zabarte in a pleated gown inspired by Roberto Capucci at the Lim-Santos rites.

THE WEDDING of Jackie Ejercito in 1999 made Salazar a favorite for society weddings.

IMELDA Marcos addressing the UN General Assembly in 1985. The pleated bosom and hand-made floral bouquets were Salazar's trademarks.

VINTAGE. Salazar also designed for non-celebs, like Mercedes Martinez. This number shows his adherence to tradition and classic proportions.

EXCITED by meditation classes, Salazar created this corner in his garden, made of *piedra china* and antique railroad tracks. When he entertained friends, he sat on this chair.

compete with the décor in a Pahiyas festival.

Bilbao would taunt Salazar on the overembellished *ternos*: "*Mukha silang pangdamit ng mga bakla sa perya* (They look like costumes for drag queens in a county fair)." But when worn, the beadwork animated the figure, and the construction flattered the body.

Salazar fine-tuned his craft analyzing the haute couture gowns that Imelda Marcos sent over for him to examine. When his patroness fled the country after the Edsa Revolution, the designer was devastated. It was more than losing an important client and a major source of income. He had equated his self-worth with the glamour of being the designer for the high and mighty. The illusory anchors of his ego had been unshackled. He spun a cocoon around himself, plunging into excesses and paranoia that led to depression. He even contemplated closing his shop and concentrating on painting.

Turning point

Salazar's life took a turn 10 years ago. Bilbao asked him to design the wedding gown for the Davila-Hagedorn nuptials. It was a silk organza ballgown with delicate rosettes. Bilbao nagged him to practice restraint, knowing his penchant for superfluous detail. Some future brides who attended the wedding ended up wanting similar versions. Clients from Manila's elite started trickling in. Receiving a flood of publicity from the gown of Jackie Ejercito Lopez, Salazar became a status symbol and his creativity started to peak. The chrysalis was now a butterfly.

When I told Lila Almario, Salazar's close friend and partner in footwear, about the designer and the butterfly, she shuddered. She pointed out a portrait of Salazar, surrounded by butterflies and a single caterpillar, done in 1988. Artist Pablo Orendain had metaphorically envisioned Salazar's future and his transformation from a pushover to a force to reckon with. There was something eerie about it—a parakeet whose tail looked like a knife stabbing his neck, had its claws on his neck and an insect gripped his throat—that part of Salazar's body that would be attacked by cancer.

In 2001, he made stretch velvet tops encrusted with rhinestones, and romantic blouses. His close friend and patron, Ben Chan, offered to have the Herbench jeans distressed for our shoot.

His last pictorial appeared in ÉLAN's December 2002 issue. It was the first time that Salazar publicly admitted his battle with throat cancer. The main reason he agreed to have it publicized was that the item focused on how his ailment propelled him to greater heights of creativity. The photograph, a collaboration with creative director Antonio Salac Santos and lensman Jun de Leon, was taken in the cave of Anthony's Wines. It captured Salazar's lyricism. Cal Carrie's Marjorie Maristela, clad in a long, crepe chemise with delicate rosettes, lay on a wooden table filled with fresh grapes, her face stained with red wine.

'Up-yours' attitude

I came to understand how Salazar worked when he made my costumes for three concerts. Initially, Bilbao egged me to give in to Salazar's creative urges. He created shirred dresses in silk chiffon for "The Tao (2000)" that aimed to achieve maximum lightness so that they would be perfect for dancing. In the opening number, I lost my balance in a lift. My partner clutched my skirt and ripped it. Salazar was mortified that he had used the wrong fabric. From then on, he made it a point to attend my rehearsals to make sure his designs would be accident-proof. Beyond looking at the technicalities, he was so innocent in his vision that he lavished praise on my dancing despite my self-loathing.

Fashion vanguard Joey Espino and Salazar would sometimes share profound conversations. Once Espino suggested that he do something uncharacteristic of his romantic style. For my next show, "The Traveler," Salazar's designs were more streamlined, inspired by the glass-and-steel architecture of the RCBC Plaza. The audience, mostly fashionistas, did not take notice of his brilliance in subtlety; they expected the usual razzle-dazzle of couture. Using his architectural training, he made a couple of costumes that abstracted the body by creating overlays of drapes and stiff electric pleats, inspired by Capucci.

For the finale, he made a simple bra top and pants, emboldened by blasts of black garter, that suggested the lines of RCBC's lobby. When he saw me in the two-piecer, Salazar was shocked at my figure and was quoted as saying, "*Wala siyang dede!*" Roughly translated, it meant I couldn't fill an A cup.

A young choreographer quarreled with Salazar, insisting that the costume was not his own concept. The normally mild-mannered designer ferociously shot back in Tagalog, "Don't talk to me like that! I've been in the business for a long time. I know what I'm doing!" It was this "up-yours" attitude that pushed him to the top of the heap in his last two years.

Salazar became a purist for yet the following show, "Dancing in the Light." He eschewed adornment and focused on the essentials —the textures of fabrics, construction, shape and, foremost, my personality. He instinctively understood that I was a practical, not dress-to-impress, person. The costumes were meant to service the dance, not to call attention to themselves.

Slipping into the beige, empire gown, I felt all his love and care that went into the monastic costume. But when I tripped over it, I asked him to alter the hemline.

Choreographer Douglas Nierras showed deference to Salazar's vision. He explained to me that a mere change of proportion would murder the designer's concept. Salazar's construction of the gown was precise from the contour of the shoulders, down to the graceful fall of the skirt. I realized that it was my responsibility to apply the technique of rising from a floor roll on a billowy skirt.

The second costume was a simple green and yellow jumpsuit that gracefully flared into a ruffled hemline. His bravura in the finale's ballgown with a boned skirt was an engineering feat. The bottom was originally made of yellow organza hankies, a trademark of his early style. When Nierras commented that the skirt needed more weight and volume for easier manipulation, Joe had no ego whatsoever about the correction. It was more extravagant and time-consuming to produce an expanse of pleated ruffles, yet he did it for the sake of perfection. Nierras was touched by Salazar's humility and concern.

"Joe cares," he said, noting that Salazar was mindful that my comfort should come first.

Final days

The last time I saw Salazar, I brought him a photograph taken by Bobot Meru of the interesting shapes created by that pleated gown. He hobbled into the room with his nurse, bald from chemotherapy and already unable to talk. We communicated through writing. He gave a thumbs-up sign when he saw the photograph. I complimented him on his genius because it needed a strong back and arms to manipulate the voluminous skirt. That same photograph was published in the Philippine Star by editor Millet Mananquil, his longtime bosom friend from the press.

In the next two months, I would talk only to his devoted assistant Crisanta Sombilod. Doctors did not allow visitors. Salazar wanted his friends to remember him as the handsome, elegant and accomplished gentleman—not a pitiful, feeble, bald mute, slightly bloated from steroids.

Salazar had been media-shy, yet he longed to be appreciated for his work, particularly the fine details of his craftsmanship. One of his last requests was to collect all the periodicals that paid tribute to his talent. He had never sought publicity, unlike other designers.

Salazar's ultimate achievement was conquering his low self-esteem and achieving perfection in his art, unprecedented in this time.

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SM SOUTHMALL LAS PIÑAS For Metro Manila southsiders, the one-stop destination for leisure shopping.

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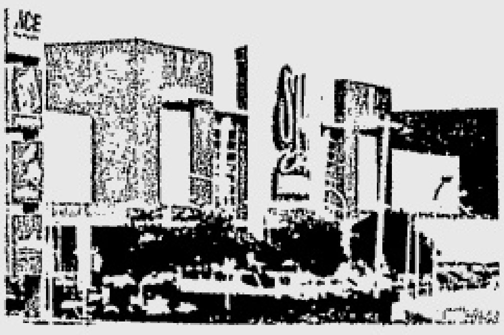

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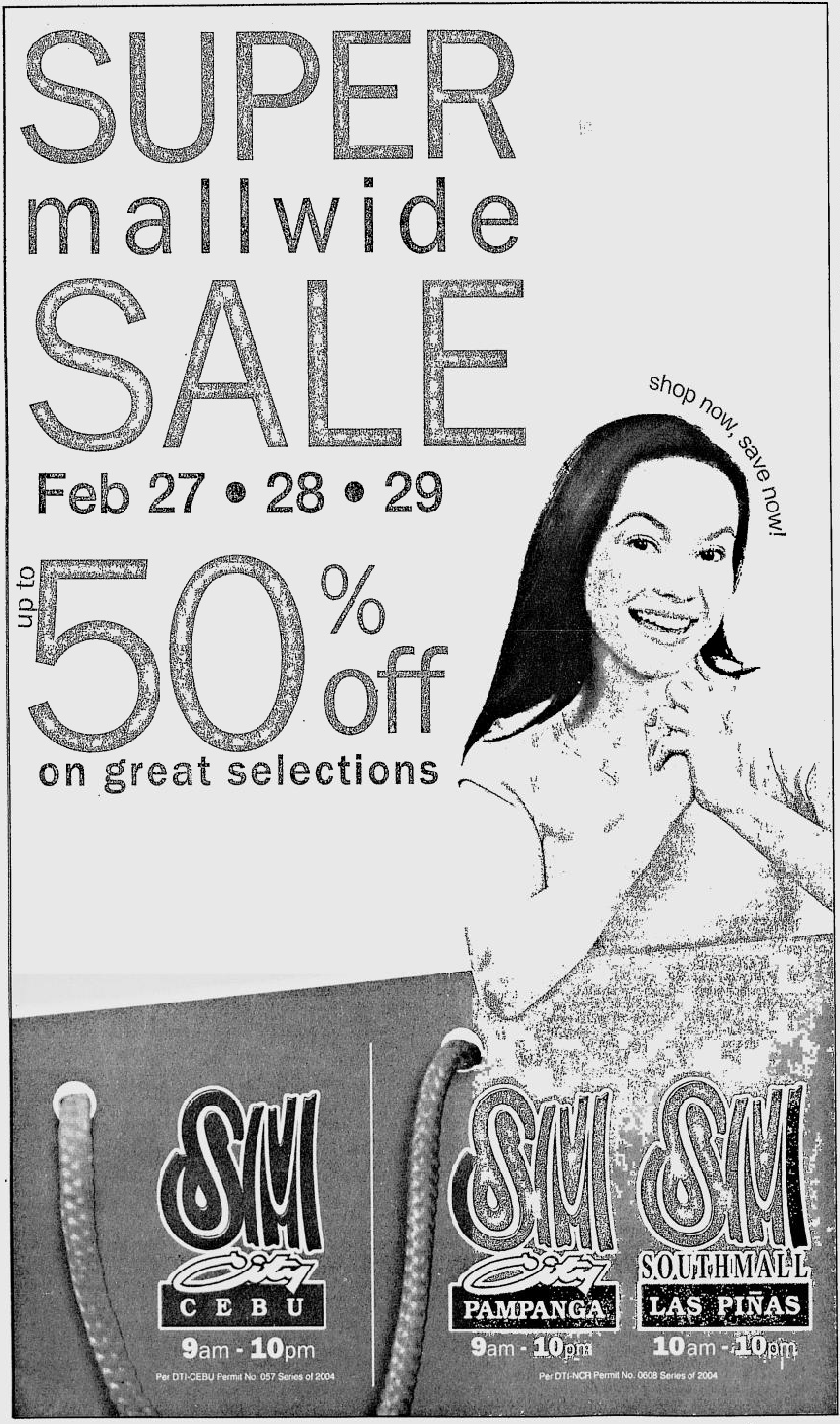

This weekend take a great leap forward to any one of the three SM Supermalls offering up to 50% off on the hottest fashions, home furnishings, I.T. gadgets, baby basics, groceries, sports gear, personal care products, stationery, novelty items and many, many more 3-day sale specials.

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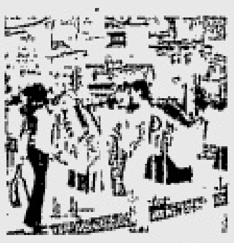
In addition to all these super choices at tempting discounts, City Pampanga shoppers **get a chance to win 72 sqm. residential lot at Beverly Place in Mexico, Pampanga.**



Every P300 cash or charge purchase–single or accumulated from **SM Department Store, SM Foodcourt, SM Supermarket and participating mall shops and food outlets** entitles a customer to one (1) raffle coupon. Also, a single purchase of four (4) **SM Cinema** tickets also entitles a customer to one (1) raffle coupon.

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What's in store for the kids? Well fun-tastic **Storyland** offers special discounts on ride tags and other amazing treats. Furthermore, shoppers can opt to spend a cool time at the **SM Ice Skating Rink** located at the lower ground floor.

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The mall is also the favorite destination of tourists on the lookout for souvenirs. For this purpose, **Travellers Lounge** has been set up near one the mall's entrances.

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SATURDAY Special
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Sheryn Regis' star rises despite defeat

By Andy Bais

"STAR In A Million" first runner-up Sheryn Regis has recovered from her shocking loss to Erik Santos. She now looks and acts like the winner she truly is.

Repertoire

We chanced upon her show at Suburbia in Malate, where she performs every Thursday. Her repertoire consisted mostly of lung-busting songs and were sure-fire crowd-pleasers. But she judiciously included soothing ballads, like Lara Fabian's "Broken Vow." It was her best number that night.

During our interview, Sheryn talked about her unexpected loss. She wanted to win badly because it was her passport to becoming a recording artist. "*Yun talaga ang pangarap ko.* Of course, I also wanted to win the house and prize money. *Malaking tulong sana yun sa* family *ko.*"

Three days

Sheryn was so devastated by her loss that she cried and could not eat for three days. She really thought it was the end of her budding singing career. Thankfully, her parents were around to console her. "*Na-realize ko* that God has bigger plans for me," she says.

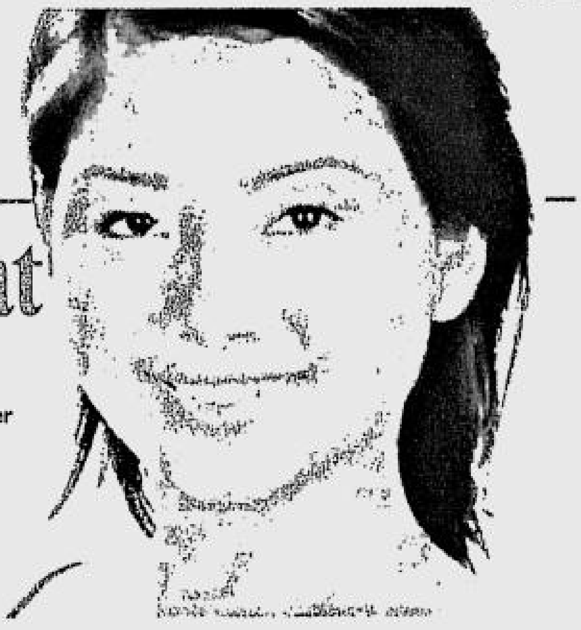
When Sheryn returned to her hometown, Carcar, Cebu, she was accorded a hero's welcome. To them, she was their "true star in a million." "*Nabuhayan ako ng loob*, and that inspired me to move on," she relates.

Then, good news came. ABS-CBN must have realized Sheryn's strong star potential, so she was recently featured in four shows for three days in a row: "Simpleng Hiling," "At Home Ka Dito," "Asap Mania" and "MTB—Ang Saya Saya!"

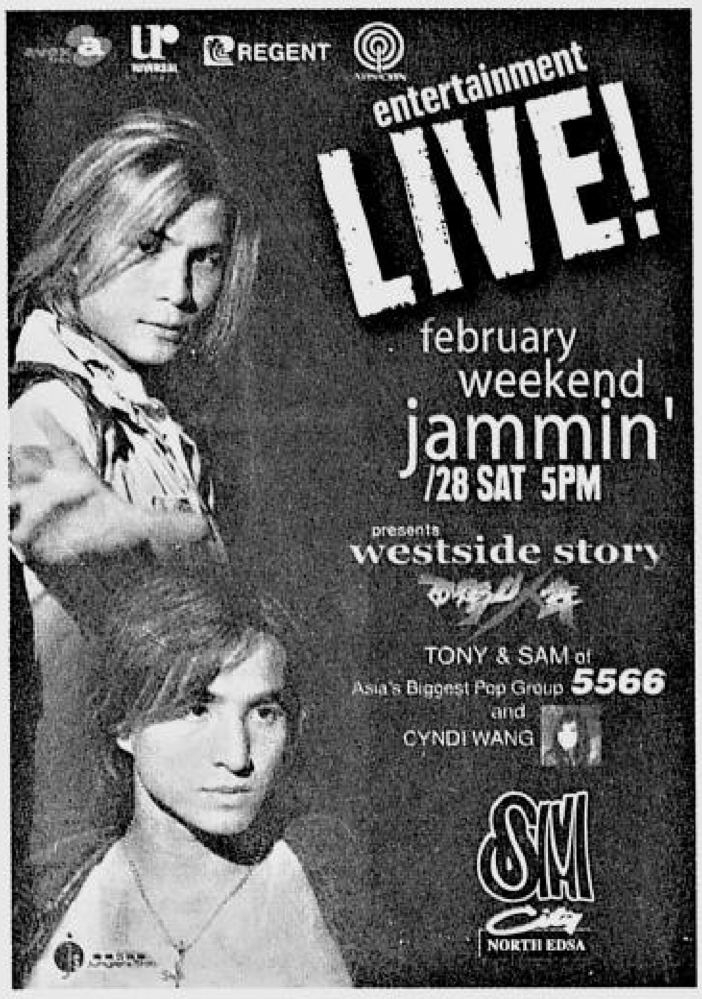
Suddenly, the talented Cebuana belter became really busy. This early, sponsors are ready to bankroll her first major concert in a big venue.

Sheryn's "losing" song during the finals, "Coming In Out Of The Rain," the carrier single of the "Star In A Million" album, is gaining headway in the charts. Originally recorded by Wendy Moten in the early '90s, it is now among the top five most requested songs nationwide. Sheryn is scheduled to release her first solo album next month.

Sheryn has definitely risen from her "Star In A Million" debacle—and has proven that you really can't put a good talent down!



REGIS. Will release her first solo album next month.



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Globe subscribers whose lives have been changed by its network services like calling, texting, MMS and other value added services have much more to benefit from the activation of new cellsites at key rural and urban centers throughout the country. With Globe's improved network coverage in seven different provinces, countryfolk such as farmers, fishermen and other people can now easily contact friends, family and even business partners and suppliers in the city.

These provinces are Cotabato, Nueva Ecija, Zambales, Cebu, Zamboanga, Iloilo and Misamis. The establishment of more cellsites in these provinces is proof that Globe is committed to its role as a partner in the development of our way of life.

Globe's ever-growing presence in the countryside and every region in the land makes it a truly indispensable partner for positive change. Be it in Luzon, Visayas or Mindanao, It shouldn't be long till the entire archipelago realizes that only Globe's expanding network coverage is the key to the advancement and enrichment of Filipino lives.

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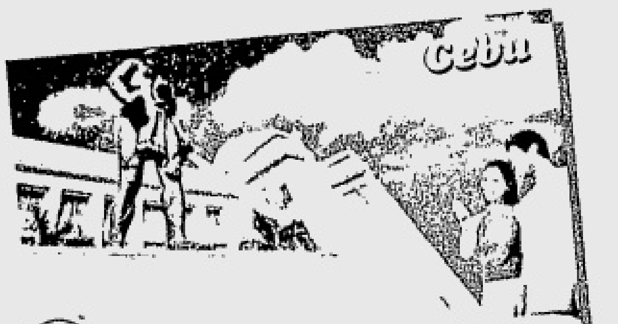
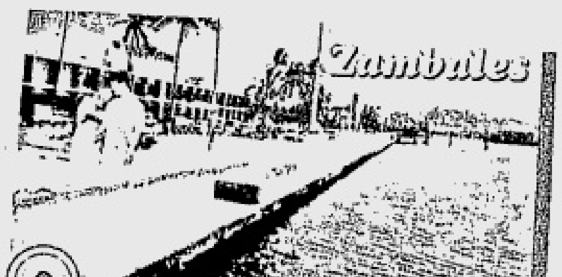
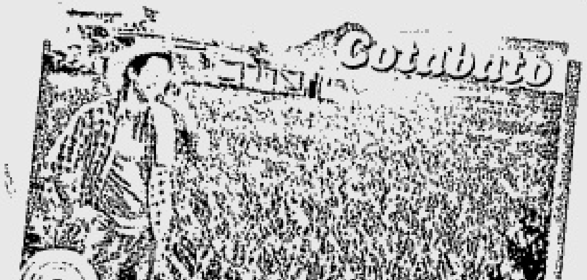


With new cellsites in Cebu, Globe's strong network makes sure everyone is always within reach, wherever they may be.

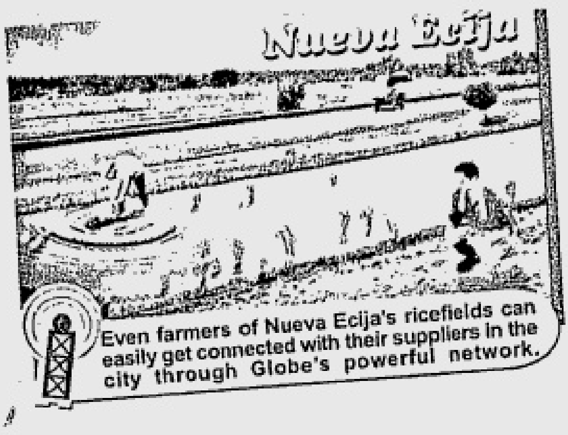
Zamboangeños enjoy Globe connectivity over land or sea.



Zambaleños and vistors alike get intensified Globe network coverage even over great distances.



Globe's enhanced network coverage makes it an indispensable partner in Cotabato's development.



Even farmers of Nueva Ecija's ricefields can easily get connected with their suppliers in the city through Globe's powerful network.

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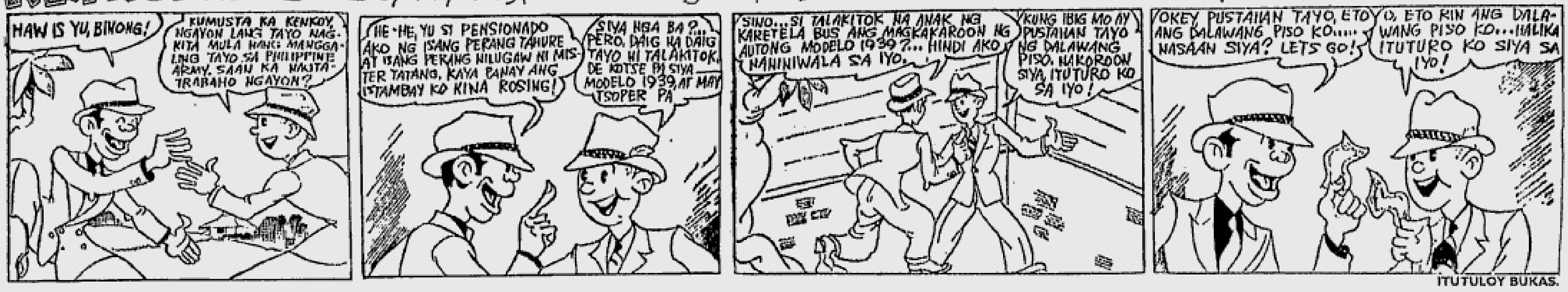
HAW IS YU, BINONG!
KUMUSTA KA KENKOY, NGAYON LANG TAYO NAGKITA MULA NANG MANGGALING TAYO SA PHILIPPINE ARMY. SAAN KA NAKITA-TRABAHO NGAYON?
HE-HE, YU SI PENSIONADO AKO NG ISANG PERANG TAHURE AT ISANG PERANG NILUGAW NI MISTER TATANG, KAYA PANAY ANG ISTAMBAY KO KINA ROSING!
SIYA NGA BA?... PERO, DAIG NA DAIG TAYO NI TALAKITOK. DE KOTSE PA SIYA MODELO 1939, AT MAY TSOPER PA.
SINO... SI TALAKITOK NA ANAK NG KARETELA BUS ANG MAGKAKAROON NG AUTONG MODELO 1939?... HINDI AKO NANINIWALA SA IYO.
KUNG IBIG MO AY PUSTAHAN TAYO NG DALAWANG PISO. NAKOROON SIYA, ITUTURO KO SA IYO!
OKEY PUSTAHAN TAYO, ETO ANG DALAWANG PISO KO..... NASAAN SIYA? LETS GO!
O, ETO RIN ANG DALAWANG PISO KO... HALIKA ITUTURO KO SIYA SA IYO!

ITUTULOY BUKAS.

YOUR WEEKLY TV GUIDE FROM FEB 28 - MARCH 5

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	6:00 Star in A Million 6:30 Magandang Gabi, Bayan 8:30 Home Along da Airport 9:00 Victim 9:30 Buttercup 10:30 Konkobersyal 11:30 "F" 12:00 Sports Unlimited	5:00 Asian Boxing Championship 7:00 Yan Ang Pinoy 8:00 Search for the 1st Tanduay Billiards Player 9:00 Cardiff Wales World Pool Championship 2003	5:30 PBA Games 9:00 Sing Galing 10:00 Lenle 11:00 Musical Specials	6:00 Search for a Star 7:00 Imbestigador 8:00 Idol Ko Si Kap 9:30 Kakabakaba Adventures 10:30 Celebrity Turns 11:30 Flash Report 12:00 Master Showman	6:00 Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo 7:00 7 Days 8:00 John Doe 9:00 Saturday Night Playhouse 11:00 PGMA	6:00 Opinyon at Desisyon 7:00 Bitag 7:30 9-Ball Tirador 9:00 Nina 10:00 String og Hearts 11:00 Iyo ang Katarungan	6:00 Baywatch 7:00 Game Plan 7:30 The Amazing Race 8:30 Boston Public 9:30 Studio 23 Presents 11:30 Reel Deel	6:00 Agila Reports 6:30 Screen Savers 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Car Guys 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:00 RJ Music Videos 9:00 Music Videos 10:00 Music Videos 11:00 Music Videos
	5:30 Sharon 7:00 Wansapanataym 8:30 Tanging Ina 9:30 24 10:00 Sunday Family Cinema 11:30 Dong Puno Tonight 12:00 The Weekend News	6:00 Asian Boxing Championship 9:00 Go For Gold 11:00 Unlimited Diving	5:30 PBA Games 9:00 Viva Cine Idols 11:00 Speed	5:30 Partners Mel & Jay 7:00 KI 8:30 Daddy Di Do Du 9:30 Sunday Night Box Office 11:20 Flash Report 11:30 Che-Che Lazaro Presents	6:00 Smack Down Wrestling 7:00 Ripley's Believe It or Not 8:00 May Puso ang Batas 9:00 Sunday's Big Event *Road to the Academy Awards* 11:00 URRC TV	6:00 Home Shopping Network 7:00 Japan Video Topics 10:00 In this Corner 11:00 MTV Filler 11:30 El Shaddai	6:00 Sponge Bob 6:30 Mr. Bean 7:00 Exposed 8:00 Spin City 8:30 Just Shoot Me 9:00 Will & Grace 9:30 The West Wing 10:30 Digital Tour 11:00 Crossing Over with John	6:00 Captured 6:30 Fresh Gear 7:00 Convergence 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 New Yankee Workshop 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Ang Iglesia ni Cristo	6:00 RJ Music Videos 9:00 Music Videos 10:00 Music Videos 11:00 Music Videos
	6:00 TV Patrol 6:30 Next Level Na, Game K N B? 7:30 Basta't Kasama Kita 8:00 Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas 8:30 It Might Be You 9:00 OK Fine! Whatever 11:00 Insider 11:30 The Correspondents	6:00 Concert at the Park 8:00 TeleDyaryo 10:00 Family Rosary Crusade	6:00 Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko 6:30 Balitang-Balita 7:00 E.R. 8:00 Guiness World Records 9:00 Friends 9:30 Misadventures of Maverick and Ariel 10:00 INO TV 10:15 The Big News 10:45 Mad TV	6:15 Frontpage 7:00 Extra Challenge 7:30 Twin Hearts 8:00 Te Amo 8:30 Endless Love II 9:00 Narito Ang Puso Ko 9:30 Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita 11:00 Saksi 11:30 I-Witness	6:00 Invader Zim 6:30 Entertainment Tonight 7:00 Just for Laffs 8:00 Jag 9:00 The Agency 10:00 Newswatch Now 10:30 Sex & the City 11:00 Atelier	8:00 NBA 10:30 IBC News Tonite 11:00 Linawin Natin	6:00 The Chronicle 7:00 Buffy 9:00 Charmed 10:00 News Central 10:30 Oprah 11:30 Travel Time	6:00 Net 25 Report 6:30 World Report Filipino Edition 7:00 Openline 7:30 Euromaxx 8:00 Convergence 8:30 DWTV Journal 9:00 Ang Tamang Daan 10:00 Pasugo	6:00 RJ Music Videos 9:00 Music Videos 10:00 Music Videos 11:00 Music Videos
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Mel Gibson's controversial 'Passion' spurs intense debate

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

VELASCO. Will the Filipino-American looker be the next "American Idol"?

THE CAST of Gines Tan's "Magsimula Ka."

VANESSA Redgrave, left, and Albert Finney play Clementine and Winston Churchill in award-winning HBO TV movie.

LAST Feb. 25, Ash Wednesday, Mel Gibson's controversial "The Passion of the Christ" started its run in the States. Right off, Gibson's film on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was hailed as a hit, as well as "the most effective recruitment tool for Christianity."

On the debit side, some critics continued to brand the movie as anti-semitic, while others complained about its excessive violence.

But the filmmaker felt the violence was necessary for viewers to truly experience the depth and extent of Jesus' sacrifice for mankind.

"The Passion of the Christ" will be shown in the Philippines next month.

'Magsimula Ka' goes to Nueva Ecija

Gines Tan's hit musical, "Magsimula Ka," will be performed anew as a CCP fundraiser in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, at 2 p.m. on March 5.

The acclaimed musical about young graduates stars some of the country's best young singers, actors and dancers.

If you want "Magsimula Ka" performed in your school or locality, call CCP Outreach's Patchie Ignacio or Sonny Cristobal at 833-0267 or Andy Bais at 713-9323 and 0919 206-5424.

'The Gathering Storm'

At 8:30 p.m. on March 2, HBO screens an exceptional film bio, "The Gathering Storm," that offers an intimate look into the marriage of Winston and Clementine Churchill during a particularly troubled time in their lives.

Together with Clementine, Churchill had to confront personal demons of depression and the specter of insolvency before he could reemerge as a reinvigorated political leader and hero.

"The Gathering Storm" is the winner of three Emmys, including best made-for-TV movie, and best actor (Albert Finney) and two Golden Globes. Clementine is played by Vanessa Redgrave. —Not to be missed!

'Will Your Fortune'

The 11th episode of George Sison's "Will Your Fortune" transformational series will be telecast at 11:30 p.m. on Feb. 29 on Channel 7. Titled "A Miracle Awaits you," the episode expounds on ways to make one's life work better, and how to transform problems into blessings. Renato Malay directs. Call 893-8444.

'Digital LG Challenge'

At 9 a.m. on Feb. 29, Channel 7's "Digital LG Challenge" features competing teams of students from Marikina High School and Pasay City West High School. Pat Perez directs.

Movies on TV

On HBO, Feb. 28 at 1:30 p.m., "Training Day." Feb. 29 at 9:30 p.m., "The Fellowship of the Ring." March 1 at 9:15 a.m., "Road to Redemption." March 2 at 8:30 p.m., "The Gathering Storm." March 3 at 12:30 p.m., "Casualties of War." March 4 at 7 p.m., "Save the Last Dance." March 5 at 12:45 p.m., "Stealing Beauty."

On Cinemax, Feb. 28 at 9 p.m., "Goodfellas." Feb. 29 at 12 noon, "The Godfather, 2." March 1 at 9 p.m., "The Godfather." March 2 at 12:15 a.m., "The Age of Innocence." March 3 at 7 p.m., "Tequila Sunrise." March 4 at 2 p.m., "Splendor in the Grass." March 5 at 8 a.m., "The Sting."

Feedback

From Alex Diaz: "As an avid follower of 'American Idol,' I am happy to inform you that Camille Velasco is now in the top 12. Here are some interesting facts about her:

Age: 18

Hometown: Haiku, Maui

First Concert: Ricky Martin

Last Concert: 50 Cent & Fabolous

When did you first start to sing?

I've sung all my life, but started performing at 16.

Do you have any formal training in singing?

No.

If you don't make it on "American Idol," what will you do?

Go to college, learn to create beats and study music.

What are your personal goals in life?

To be a respected singer and songwriter.

What album would your friends be surprised to learn that you own?

ABBA.

MEL GIBSON'S/ D3

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ELEANOR POWELL

World's best tap dancer fondly remembered

By Behn Cervantes

WHEN we think of Hollywood musicals, we fondly remember great dance numbers that were highlights of those grand films—movies that celebrated fantasy and life with verve, elan and style. Dancers in those movies made everything look so easy!

POWELL. Starred on Broadway at 17.

American invention

Tap dancing is one of America's contributions to the arts. It is an American invention that finds kinship with Irish dancing. In the '30s and '40s, it was a required talent for entertainers since vaudeville was at its peak.

Some of Hollywood's biggest attractions were singing and dancing stars. The first talkie had Al Jolson singing "Sonny Boy." Audiences heard not only the real voice of a singer, but could also hear the incessant tapping of dancers' shoes.

Legitimate stage

Early cinema borrowed material that had been performed on the legitimate stage. Movie scouts watched out for outstanding stage talents whom they could recruit for Hollywood.

One such dancing talent was Eleanor Powell, who started tap dancing at age 11, and was already appearing on Broadway by the time she was 17. She landed a lucrative Hollywood contract at 23, and headlined fabulous MGM musicals like "Born To Dance" and "Broadway Melody of 1938."

Popularity

Powell, was soon declared the world's best tap dancer. She retired upon marrying Glenn Ford in 1943. By that time, her popularity had waned, along with the public's interest in tap.

On the other hand, Ann Miller was hailed as the "world's *fastest* tap dancer."

After Powell's 1959 divorce from Ford, she performed in Las Vegas and New York before she finally retired professionally.

Mel Gibson's . . .

From page D2

What was the first CD you ever bought?

Gangsta Lean.

What is in your CD player right now?

2Pac's 'Better Days.'

Who is your "American Idol"?

Lauryn Hill

What is your favorite type of music?

Hip-hop.

What is your favorite song?

I don't have one.

Favorite male pop artist?

Prince.

Favorite female pop artist?

Beyoncé.

Favorite album of all time?

Lauryn Hill's.

Which kind of performance in the music world is your style most like?

Hip-hop.

Most embarrassing moment?

When I ran out of breath on stage.

If you couldn't sing, which talent would you most like to have?

Drawing.

What has been your proudest moment so far?

Being an older sister.

What is your definition of an 'American Idol'?

A kind spirit truly in touch with the vibrations of music.

Why do you want to be an 'American Idol'?

So I can make and share my own music.

Who is your favorite judge, and why?

I love Paula because I grew up with her music around the house.

Who is your least favorite judge and why?

I love all of them! Simon is actually a funny dude.

What advice do you have for other hopefuls?

Do your best, follow your heart, and learn to take criticism to better yourself!"

De Pano, Fegi team up anew

PERENNIAL Himig Handog finalist and winner Arnel de Pano will reprise his romantic eloquence in "Kailan Kita Mamahalin" with Anna Fegi as interpreter in ABS-CBN's Himig Handog Love Songs 2004, on March 5, 9 p.m., on ABS-CBN.

Hit song

A seasoned pop-gospel songwriter, De Pano is best known for the hit song, "Lead Me, Lord," originally sung by Basil Valdez. He was grand prize winner twice, first at the 2000 Himig Handog for "Si Ka Bayani," and at the 2003 Himig Handog for "Kung Ako Na Lang Sana."

He was also the composer of ABS-CBN's 50th anniversary theme song, "Lipad Pangarap," recorded by megastar Sharon Cuneta.

When Anna went solo, De Pano developed an admiration for Anna's singing. When he composed "Kailan Kita Mamahalin," he chose her as interpreter.

Natural talent

"She has immense natural talent. Because of her theater experience, *iba ang* attack *niya* when she sings," De Pano explains. "She sounds young but her voice is textured. She is capable of sounding soft and, at the same time, can reach very high notes."

Fegi began her professional career five years ago in Manila in Bibsy Carballo's stable of talents. She eventually joined ABS-CBN's "Asap," and recorded two albums. She was the 2003 Aliw Awards' Most Promising Artist.

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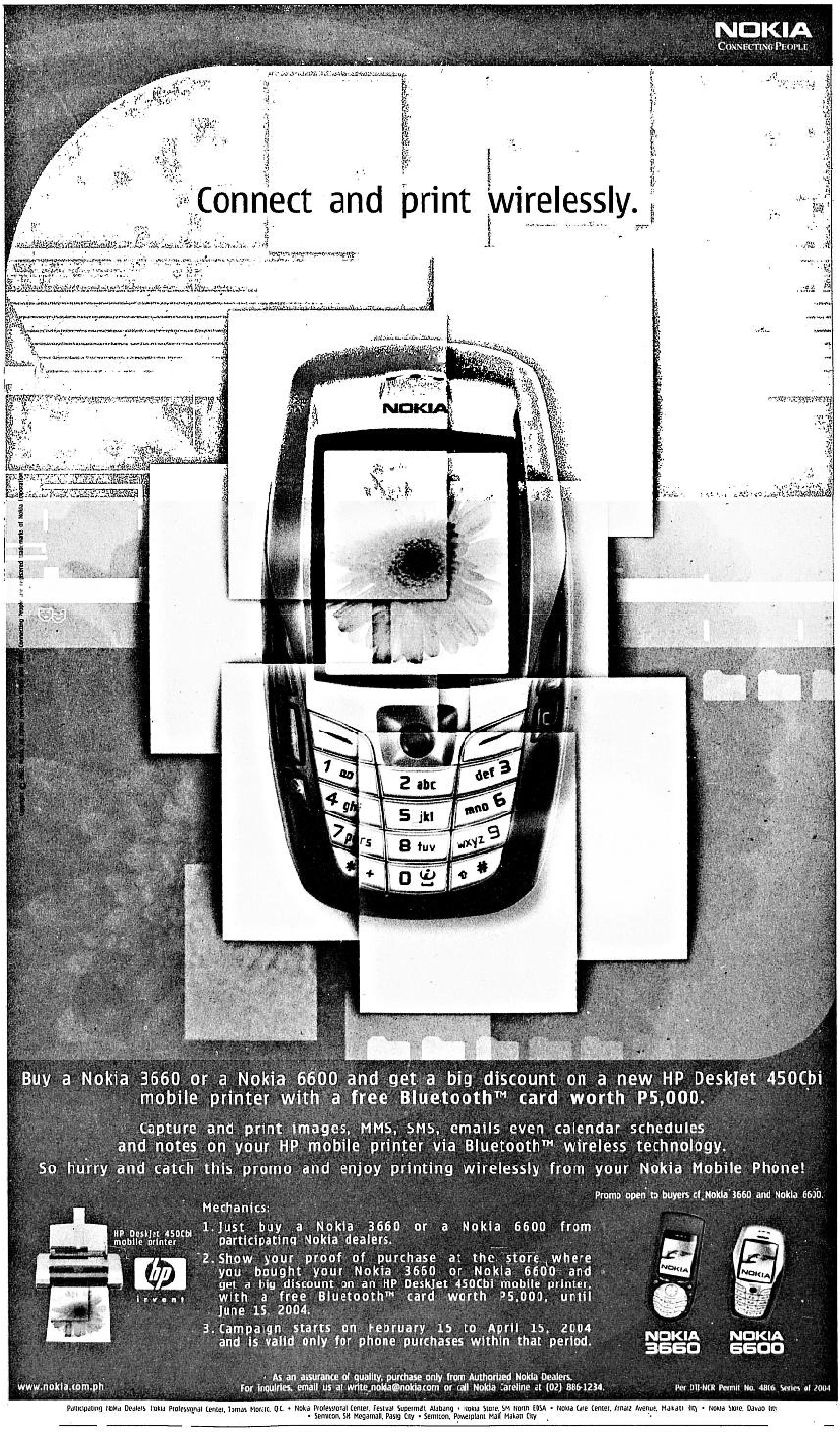
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Rousing musical, emotional tributes save staid Grammys

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

FROM Chynna Delima: **"I caught a portion of the 46th Annual Grammy Awards. I loved the tribute on the Beatles and Luther Vandross. Please write about it."**

Indeed, the 2004 Grammys offered some visual and musical treats. The three-and-a-half hour show went from exciting to ho-hum, and boasted of production numbers that combined the recording industry's old guards and young blood.

Five wins

Beyonce, who went home with record-tying five wins, proved that Whitney and Mariah's heiress has arrived—without the attitude, thank goodness. She opened the show with Prince, and later sang "Crazy in Love" which ended with a white dove landing on Knowles' hand, just in time for her last note!

Justin Timberlake won for best male pop vocal performance ("Cry Me A River"). Christina Aguilera, winner for female pop vocal performance ("Beautiful"), wore the night's most revealing outfit, but said she didn't want to do "what Janet did."

First notes

Earth, Wind and Fire, garbed in loud '70s fripperies, looked a bit long in the tooth beside Album of the Year winners (for "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below") OutKast. The usually vocally brilliant Alicia Keys sang the first notes of her Luther tribute off-key.

Other curious pairings: John Mayer looked like a tall, high school student beside "Friends" star Matthew Perry; Snoop Dogg and Jason Alexander, who joked about Britney Spear's recent seven-hour marriage to her high school sweetheart, Alexander's namesake.

Double winner Eminem was a no-show; Record of the Year winner (for "Clocks") Coldplay's Chris Martin, Gwyneth Paltrow's hubby, plugged US presidential nominee John Kerry.

Five-time nominee 50 Cent went home empty-handed. "LOTR's" Sean Astin and Norah Jones presented the best new artist award to Evanescence. Jones dominated the Grammys last year with five wins.

BEYONCÉ (shown here with Prince) was the biggest winner this year.

The dull show, which included Bill Clinton and Mikhail Gorbachev among the winners (best spoken word album for children, "Peter and the Wolf"), was saved by rousing musical tributes.

The show commemorated the Beatles' first appearance on American TV's "The Ed Sullivan Show" exactly 40 years that night, and awarded the group the President's Award.

When Yoko Ono accepted on behalf of Lennon, she said: "In the beginning, there was the Beatles." To which, a writer at E! answered: "And then, *she* came along."

Even more touching was when Celine Dion's rendition of the recently comatose but recuperating Luther Vandross' Song of the Year-winner, "Dance with My Father," with video clips of Vandross and Dion with their respective fathers in the background.

Telecast delay

CBS opted for a five-minute telecast delay to make sure there wouldn't be a repetition of the Janet-Justin Super Bowl incident. But it didn't save the show from major technical glitches that ate up a considerable chunk of Dion's "Dance with My Father" dramatic *tour-de-force*. Instead of hearing her voice, we heard technical people panicking frantically ("Can we get a soundcheck?!," etc.)—on audio!

No, Janet Jackson was not barred from performing at the Grammys. She was informed by the CBS network that she, along with Justin Timberlake, would only be allowed on the show if she apologized for the nipple-showing stunt she pulled at the Super Bowl a week earlier. She declined (although she has issued a written apology), but Timberlake, who was up for five Grammys (and won two), accepted.

* * *

'TVM' turns four!

Soul diva Jaya joins Tami Monsod and Jenny Jamora in New Voice's 10th year anniversary season-opener, "The Vagina Monologues," at the Republic of Malate on March 18, 19 and 20. Call 896-6695 or 896-5497.

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WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

BUSINESS wasn't thriving for Gigi, so some belt-tightening was necessary. She turned to inexpensive food that would tide her over and satisfy her hunger until things got better.

Suggestion

This situation is not uncommon today. Cutting down on costly food items is a good idea. My suggestion: Noodles.

Instant noodles quickly satisfy and can be enjoyable and quite filling. You can also have it with rice. (It is only in the Philippines where people eat noodles with rice.)

Quite impressive

I recommend Lucky Me Supreme Pinoy Chicken Mami and Lucky Me Supreme Sotanghon Chicken Soup. They just need hot water and, after three minutes—voila! The results are quite impressive. I love both, but the *sotanghon* is something else, with its chicken and garlic pieces. For a craving stomach, the hot soup soothes.

The *sotanghon* absorbs most of the water. Just add boiling water, its seasoning, and wait for three minutes. Super! The *mami* version contains Sky Flakes crackers. *Sarap din!*

With inexpensive food like this, belt-tightening isn't such a bad idea!

Happy eating!

Musical for women of a certain age

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

WHEN Music Museum's Precy Florentino watched this musical comedy in New York, she immediately thought of bringing it to Manila. Margie Floirendo of BahagHari Productions turned that bright idea into a delightful reality.

Power executive

They got Leo Rialp to direct big name artists: Nanette Inventor as "Earth Mother" in the throes of menopause; Sheila Francisco as a menopausal Midwest housewife; Mitch Valdez as a power executive and Leah Navarro as an aging soap opera star.

The four women meet at Bloomingdale's, an encounter that leads to a hilarious repartee and repertoire.

For tickets, call Ticketworld at 891-9999 or Music Museum at 721-0635. Playdates are on March 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27, and April 2 and 3. Show starts at 8 p.m.

* * *

The Mandy Navasero Digital Photo Workshop is scheduled on March 6, 13, and 20, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We will discuss tips on good photography and lighting. Call 896-3208 and 899-1767 or email mn_photocom@l-manila.com.ph

NAVARRO. Plays an aging soap opera star.

SATURDAY Special

Norah Jones feels right at home

JONES. Lives up to staggeringly high expectations.

By Rito P. Asilo

WHAT does Norah Jones do for an encore? Nothing much, really—just another album that has as much commercial appeal as it has lyrical and melodic charm.

Narrative tone

In "Feels Like Home," Jones lives up to the staggeringly high expectations set by her Grammy-sweeping, eight million-selling debut, "Come Away With Me." Her tunesmiths smartly crank up lyrics that go well with her songs' narrative tone and content.

While she hits all the right notes in this album, be forewarned: It won't be love at first "sound" as it was with her first collection—most of the songs will grow on you after repeated spins in your CD player.

In the 13-track album, of which the pretty 24-year-old musical ingenue co-writes six, mostly with boyfriend-bassist Lee Alexander, her feel for thought-provoking melody is evident. The songs don't reveal their emotional richness in one go. Likewise, her intriguing lyrics constantly make you wonder if they conceal subtexts that are deeper than what is written.

In the delightful, chant-like first track, "Sunrise," she sings: "Sunrise/ Couldn't tempt us if it tried/ 'Cause the afternoon's already come and gone . . ./ And now the night will throw its cover down on me again/ And if I'm right/ It's the only way to bring me back . . . to you." And Alexander's groovesome bass in the background provides moody affirmation.

Introspective musings

Jones smothers us with introspective musings: In the hopeful "Above Ground," she pleads: "Meet me outside, above ground/ I see you on your way/ I'll be with you someday." In the wistfully affecting "Humble Me": "What do you say when it's all gone away/ Truth spoke in whispers will tear you apart/ No matter how hard you resist it/ It never rains when you want it to."

Her uncluttered interpretation and the acoustic guitar riffs of Jesse Harris and Kevin Breit allow "Those Sweet Words," this album's "Don't Know Why" and our personal favorite, to transcend its mawkish sentiments.

(To be concluded)

UPCAT REVIEW
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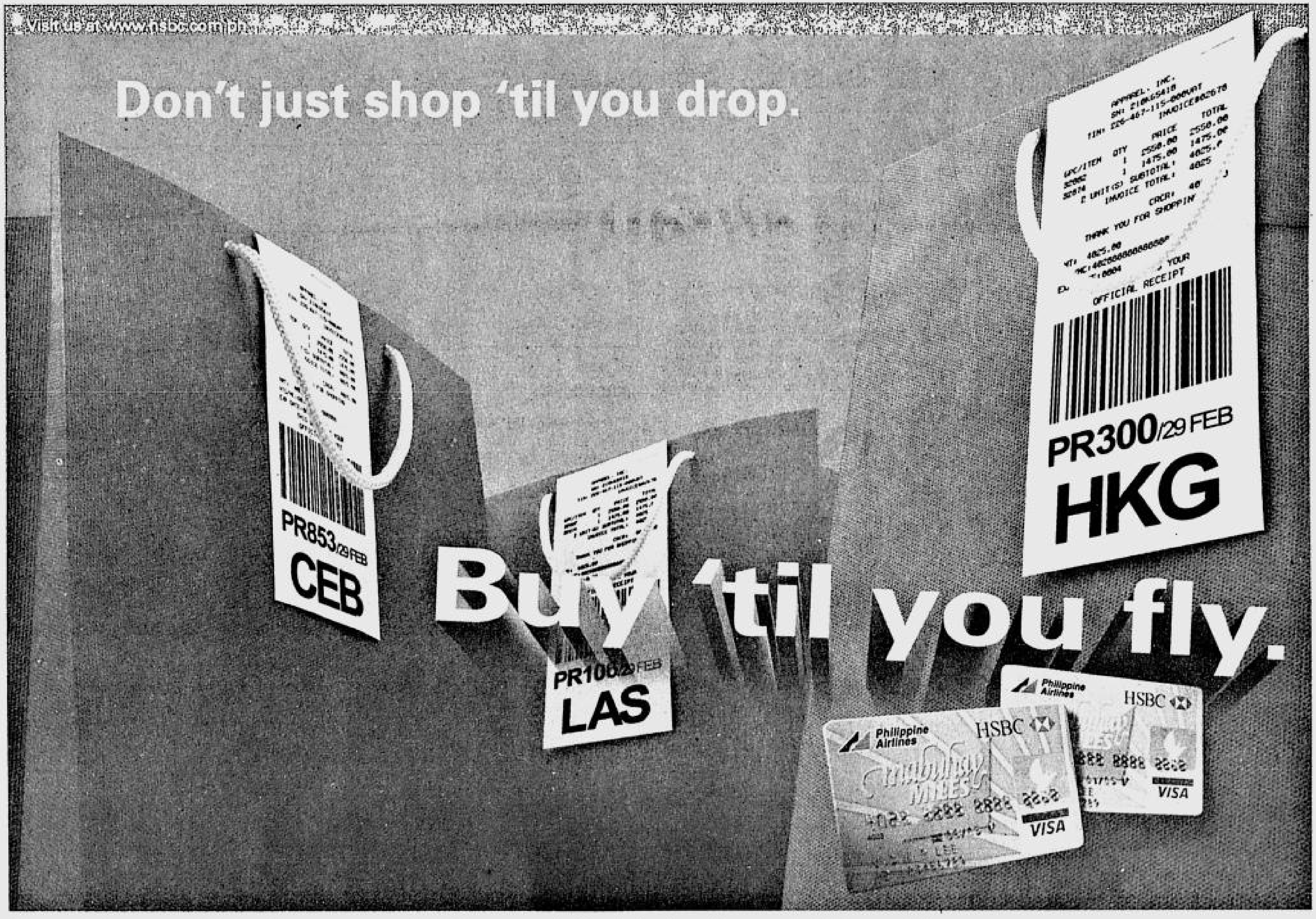

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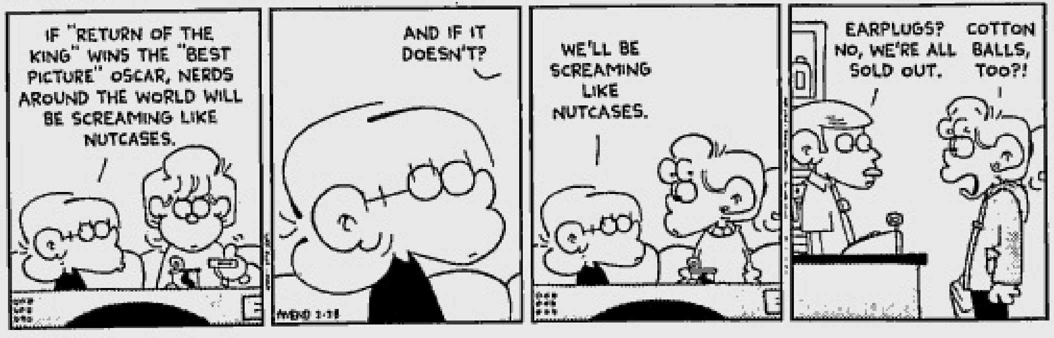
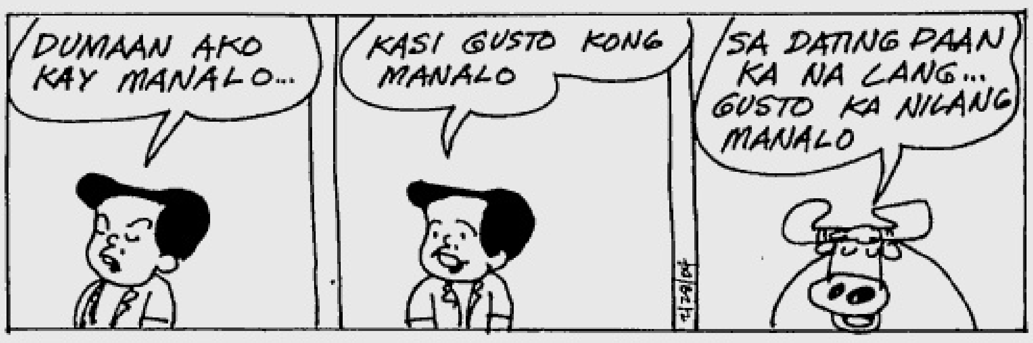
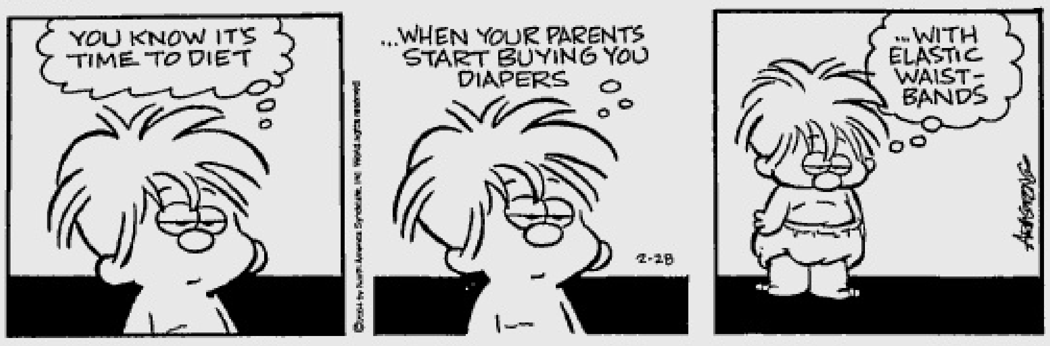
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


IF "RETURN OF THE KING" WINS THE "BEST PICTURE" OSCAR, NERDS AROUND THE WORLD WILL BE SCREAMING LIKE NUTCASES.
AND IF IT DOESN'T?
WE'LL BE SCREAMING LIKE NUTCASES.
EARPLUGS? NO, WE'RE ALL SOLD OUT.
COTTON BALLS, TOO?!

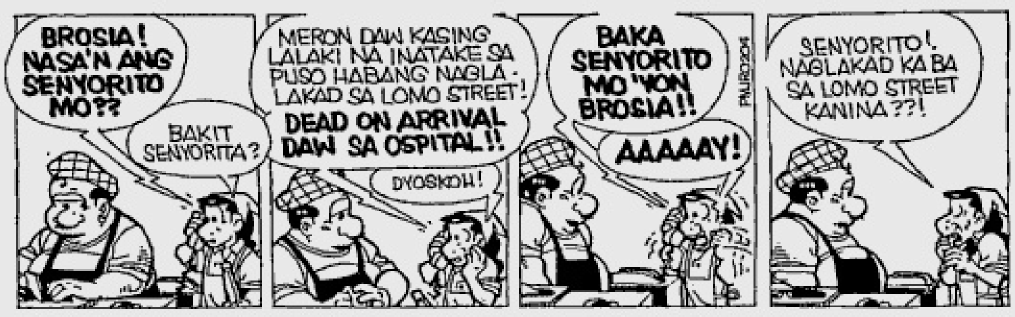
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


DUMAAN AKO KAY MANALO...
KASI GUSTO KONG MANALO
SA DATING DAAN KA NA LANG... GUSTO KA NILANG MANALO

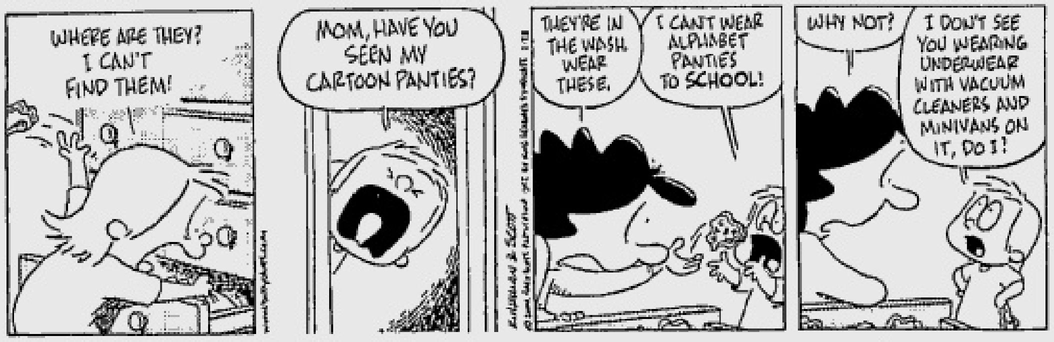
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


YOU KNOW IT'S TIME TO DIET
...WHEN YOUR PARENTS START BUYING YOU DIAPERS
2-28
...WITH ELASTIC WAIST-BANDS

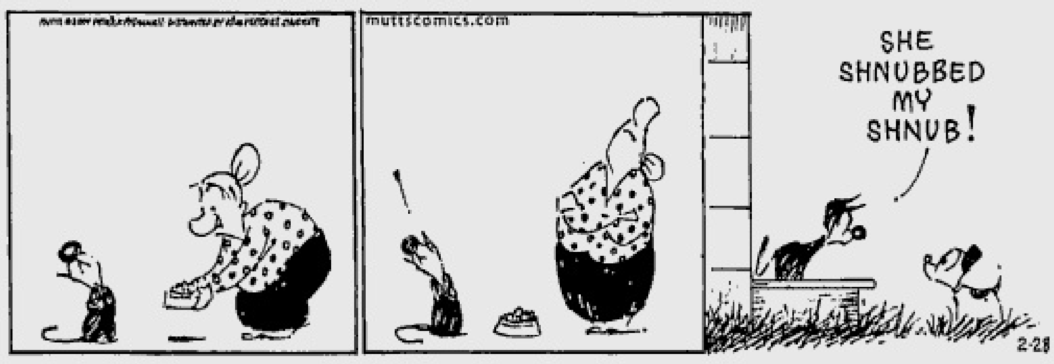
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


BROSIA! NASA'N ANG SENYORITO MO??
BAKIT SENYORITA?
MERON DAW KASING LALAKI NA INATAKE SA PUSO HABANG NAGLA-LAKAD SA LOMO STREET! DEAD ON ARRIVAL DAW SA OSPITAL!!
DYOSKOH!
BAKA SENYORITO MO 'YON BROSIA!!
AAAAAY!
SENYORITO! NAGLAKAD KA BA SA LOMO STREET KANINA??!

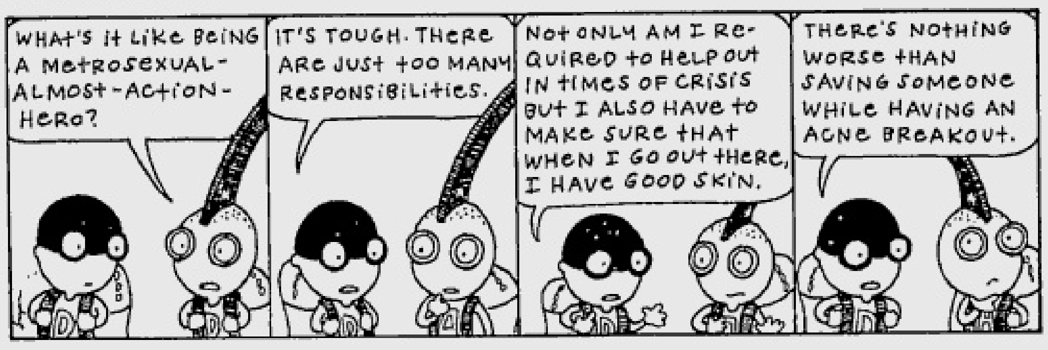
BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


WHERE ARE THEY? I CAN'T FIND THEM!
MOM, HAVE YOU SEEN MY CARTOON PANTIES?
THEY'RE IN THE WASH. WEAR THESE.
I CAN'T WEAR ALPHABET PANTIES TO SCHOOL!
WHY NOT?
I DON'T SEE YOU WEARING UNDERWEAR WITH VACUUM CLEANERS AND MINIVANS ON IT, DO I?

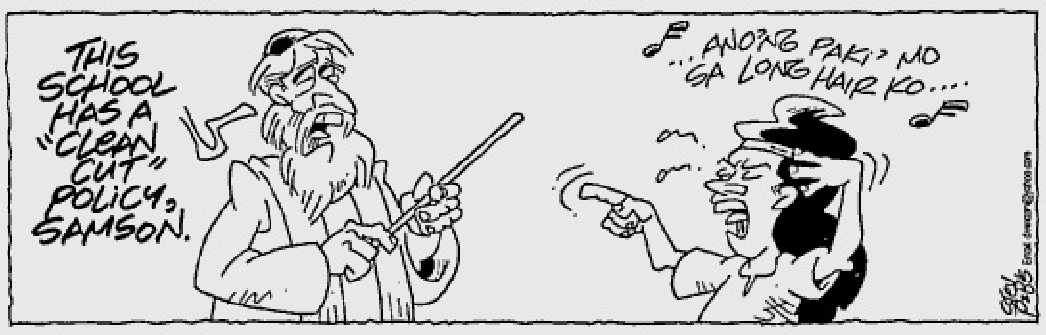
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


mutts comics.com
SHE SHNUBBED MY SHNUB!
2-28

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A METROSEXUAL-ALMOST-ACTION-HERO?
IT'S TOUGH. THERE ARE JUST TOO MANY RESPONSIBILITIES.
NOT ONLY AM I REQUIRED TO HELP OUT IN TIMES OF CRISIS BUT I ALSO HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT WHEN I GO OUT THERE, I HAVE GOOD SKIN.
THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN SAVING SOMEONE WHILE HAVING AN ACNE BREAKOUT.

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THIS SCHOOL HAS A "CLEAN CUT" POLICY, SAMSON.
...ANONG PAKI' MO SA LONG HAIR KO....

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are very vibrant and alive. You have a great zest for life. Your positive energy enthuses those around you. Because of your strong influence and passion for life, you need to develop focus (because others will follow you). You are seeking big answers to big questions. Important cycles will wrap up and come to a close this year.
Birthdate of: Linus Pauling, chemist; Mario Andretti, race car driver; Bernadette Peters, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a good day to make long-range plans that can solidify and secure your home base. You have a sense that you can see into the future now.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is an excellent day to make repairs to broken appliances or minor things where you live. In the same way, you can mend broken relationships within your family structure.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): A parent, boss or mentor figure in your life might give you financial assistance or at least financial advice today. Definitely keep your ears open.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good day to organize yourself in your environment. Your critical faculty is very sharp. Focus on routine matters.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is an excellent day to take care of details concerning insurance matters, debt, shared property, wills and inheritances. You have the energy and discipline to plow through this kind of red tape today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a day for serious matters. You're definitely not inclined to play games or take part in trivial amusements now. Abstractions don't interest you; you just want the facts.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might feel reserved with people today. This isn't because you are afraid or shy; it's because you are more interested in serious subjects now.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Older people might be able to give young minds good advice today. Plans for the future and ideas about what to expect will be the focus.

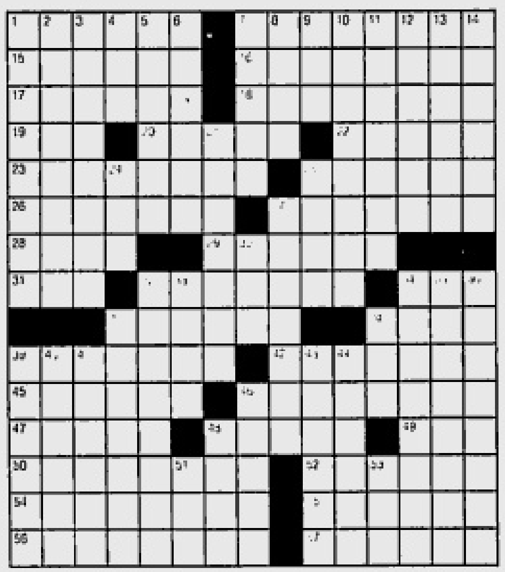
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You want to save for a rainy day. You're willing to work hard today for tomorrow's benefits. You certainly don't want to waste any money now. (This is refreshing.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You have the ability, discipline and interest to tackle routine work that requires attention to detail. Because of this, get down to it! You can get a lot done today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is an excellent day to review your bank account or your expenditures. You won't miss a thing. Your eye is like that of a hawk today.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Lovers and romantic interests might discuss serious plans for the future today. You want to know where something is headed. Furthermore, you want to know if it has staying power.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH
2/28/04

ACROSS
1 Entity's manifestation
7 Clot
15 Restore to consciousness
16 Essential amino acid
17 Ribbed cloth
18 Like a smooth transition
19 Eng. instruction letters
20 Cunning trickery
22 Underground excavations
23 Shackled
25 Narrow and elongated
26 Wears down by friction
27 Vitamin-D deficiency disease
28 Plagiarize
29 Maternity birds
31 VAT word
32 Awakens
34 Craze
37 Nosedive
38 Gram or rail lead-in
39 Spaces between leaf veins
42 Abilities
45 Flocks of females
46 Legendary land
47 Maturing
48 Mutation
49 Actress MacGraw
50 Traveled smoothly on horseback
52 Doddering
54 Form an open sore
55 Scandinavian coins
56 Sower
57 Appraise

DOWN
1 Ancient find
2 Spine piece
3 Amelia Earhart, e.g.
4 Muscle spasm
5 Declared openly
6 Begin to get a pension
7 Scoped out on the sly
8 Bauxite and galena
9 __ Khan IV
10 Tricky devices
11 Disconnects
12 One with a claim on his property
13 Remove from office by vote
14 Plural of Mr.
21 Things learned
24 Hunter of Hollywood
25 Old money in Naples
27 Ribbon ornament
30 Barge puller
32 Accusers with no proof
33 Regrets bitterly
34 "Suspicion" star
35 West Indies islands
36 Personnel records
37 Directed
38 Fellows
39 Ancient calculator
40 Wine and dine
41 Make evident
43 Iditarod location
44 L.A. hoopsters
46 Tennyson's "Enoch __"
48 Greek cheese
51 Aries
53 Figs.

Friday's Puzzle Solved

D	A	D	A		O	T	I	C		S	P	A	C	E
I	V	A	N		Z	E	T	A		P	E	S	O	S
S	E	N	T		O	N	E	L		R	O	P	E	S
A	N	C	I	E	N	T	M	A	R	I	N	E	R	
R	U	E		N	E	H		M	E	G		R	C	A
M	E	D	A	L		S	C	A	M		G	A	I	T
			R	A	D		O	R	G		A	T	O	M
	S	E	N	I	O	R	C	I	T	I	Z	E	N	
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B	A	E	Z		M	E	A	D		E	D	S	E	L
E	K	G		L	E	O		I	S	R		A	L	E
	E	L	D	E	R	S	T	A	T	E	S	M	A	N
S	P	A	I	N		T	O	L	E		O	O	P	S
R	I	S	K	Y		A	T	O	P		S	A	S	E
A	T	S	E	A		T	O	G	S		O	N	E	S

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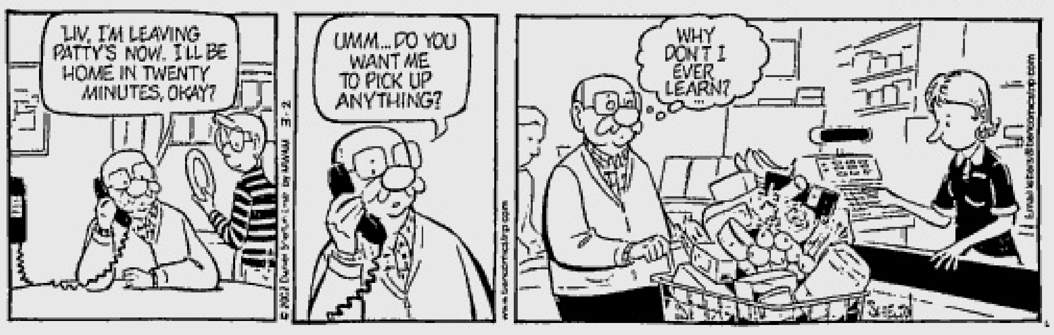
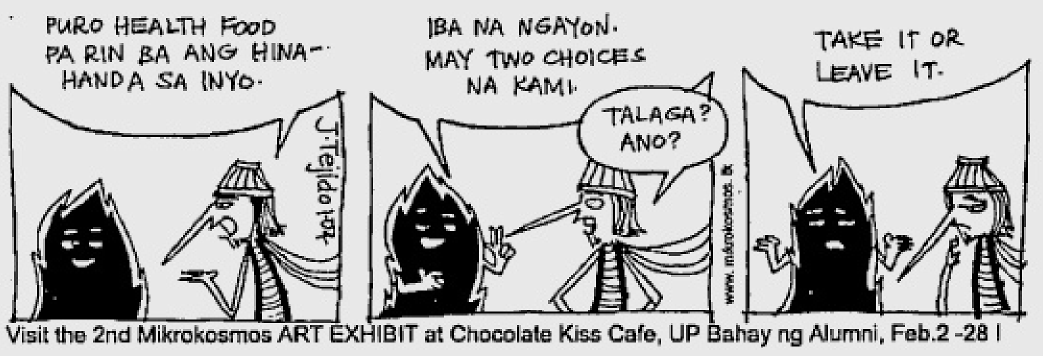
2/28/04

BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON

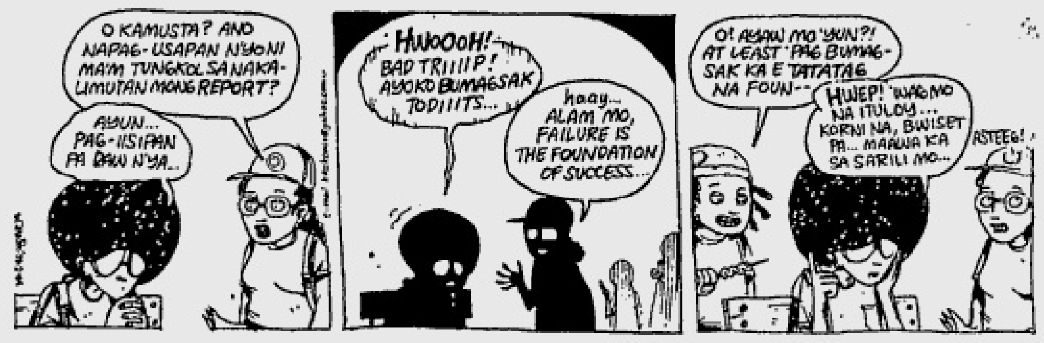

LIV, I'M LEAVING PATTY'S NOW. I'LL BE HOME IN TWENTY MINUTES, OKAY?
UMM...DO YOU WANT ME TO PICK UP ANYTHING?
WHY DON'T I EVER LEARN?

MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

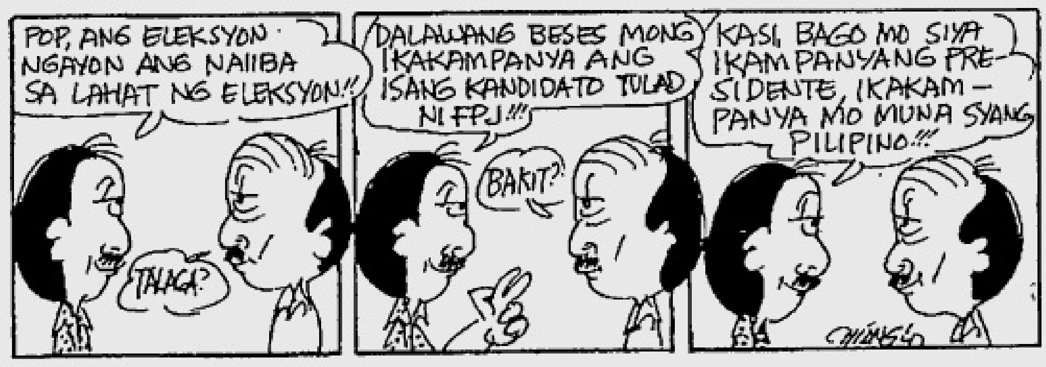

PURO HEALTH FOOD PA RIN BA ANG HINA-HANDA SA INYO.
J. Tejido
IBA NA NGAYON. MAY TWO CHOICES NA KAMI.
TALAGA? ANO?
TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.

Visit the 2nd Mikrokosmos ART EXHIBIT at Chocolate Kiss Cafe, UP Bahay ng Alumni, Feb.2 -28 !

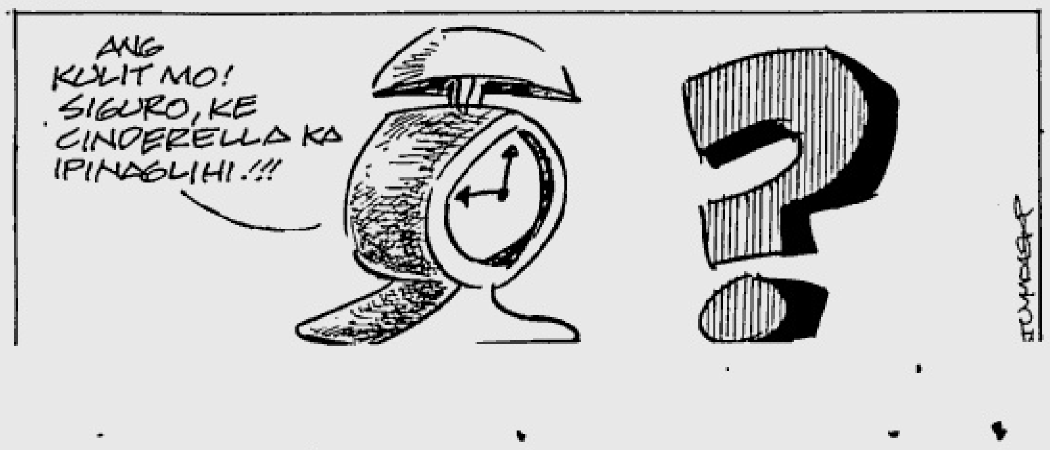
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


O KAMUSTA? ANO NAPAG-USAPAN N'YO NI MA'M TUNGKOL SA NAKA-LIMUTAN MONG REPORT?
AYUN... PAG-IISIPAN PA DAW N'YA..
HWOOOH! BAD TRIIIIP! AYOKO BUMAGSAK TODIIITS...
haay... ALAM MO, FAILURE IS THE FOUNDATION OF SUCCESS...
O! AYAW MO 'YUN?! AT LEAST 'PAG BUMAG-SAK KA E TATATAG NA FOUN--
HWEP! 'WAG MO NA ITULOY... KORNI NA, BWISET PA... MAHIYA KA SA SARILI MO...
ASTEEG!

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


POP, ANG ELEKSYON NGAYON ANG NAIIBA SA LAHAT NG ELEKSYON!!
TALAGA?
DALAWANG BESES MONG IKAKAMPANYA ANG ISANG KANDIDATO TULAD NI FPJ!!!
BAKIT?
KASI, BAGO MO SIYA IKAMPANYANG PRE-SIDENTE, IKAKAM-PANYA MO MUNA SYANG PILIPINO!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG KULIT MO! SIGURO, KE CINDERELLA KA IPINAGLIHI.!!!

Mitch Valdes performs in new stage musical

By Nestor U. Torre

FANS of Mitch Valdes have been nagging her to perform again in a stage musical. They were bowled over by her triumphant star turns in such hits as "Katy!," "Gypsy" and "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and they want more—much more of the same!

VALDES. Returns to theater acting and singing in "Menopause, the Musical."

Loyal followers

Well, after appearing in one comedy club act after another, Mitch has finally made her loyal followers very happy by performing in a new theater production, "Menopause, the Musical," which opens on March 5 and will be performed every Friday and Saturday until April at Music Museum.

Even better, the Bahaghari Productions show is directed by Leo Rialp, and also stars similarly effective performers like Leah Navarro, Nanette Inventor and Sheila Francisco.

Of course, the P64,000 question is: Why come up with a musical about menopause (of all possible topics)?! Well, it turns out that writer-lyricist Jeanie Linders was concerned about many people's lack of real understanding about the female climateric, and felt that illumination on this score could best be provided by a fun-filled show with an important message at its core.

Better understanding

Linders designed the musical to be both entertainment and a way of advocating better understanding of menopause. Incidentally, Linders' concern is shared by Oprah Winfrey, who has done several editions of her popular talk show on menopause and peri-menopause.

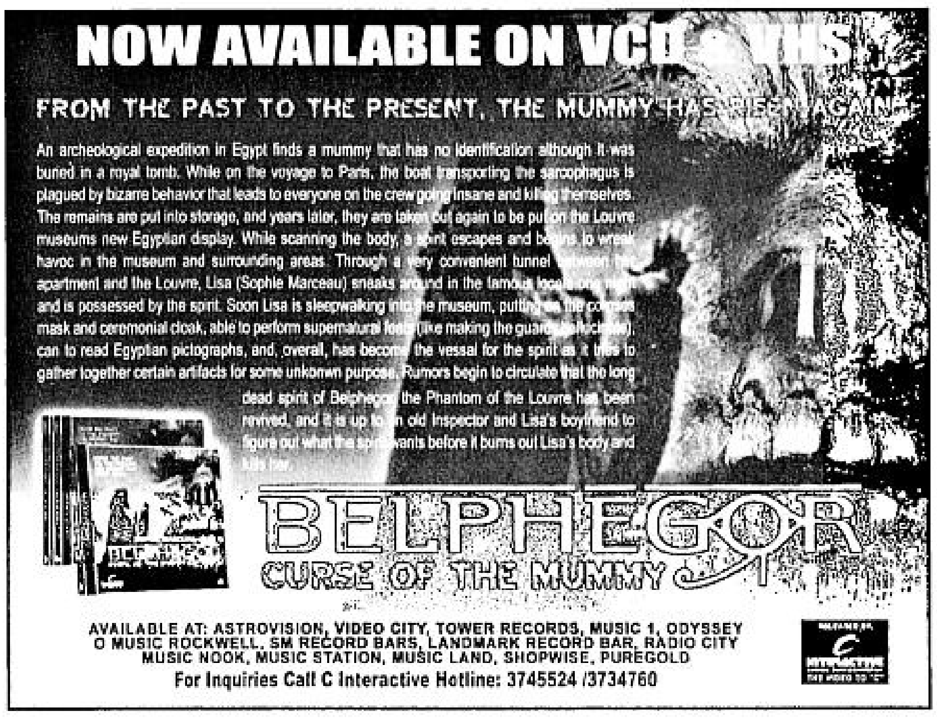
The musical's story revolves around four mature women in different stages of menopause. They bump into each other at a lingerie sale, and they break out into hit songs from the baby boomer era, like "The Great Pretender" and "Staying Alive," but with new lyrics that bring out the musical's thematic concerns.

To make the entertaining show even more of a learning experience, Bahaghari producers Margie Moran Floirendo, Maan Hontiveros, Carmita Francisco and Nina Romualdez have elicited the support of the Philippine Society of Climacteric Medicine.

Health concerns

The society's members, mostly gynecologists and medical practitioners specializing in female health concerns, have wholeheartedly endorsed "Menopause, the Musical" as an effective and entertaining way to promote women's well-being during the pre-menopause, menopause and post-menopause stages.

Through the musical-comedy show, audiences will see the lighter side of menopause. The production advocates HRT or "Humor Replacement Theory" for lighthearted illumination, and also invites men to catch a performance, to understand menopausal women at home and in the workplace, so they can help and handle them better.



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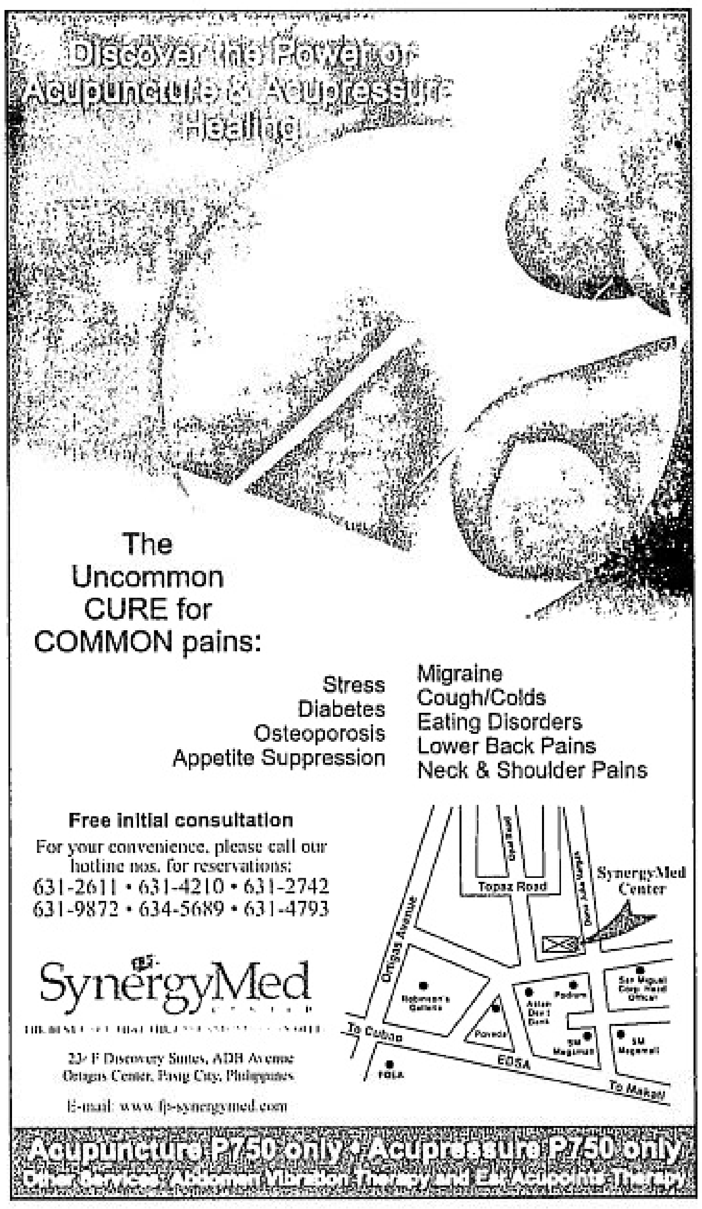

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SATURDAY Super
E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph
Contributing Editor **Pam Pastor**
Creative Director **Tim Yap**

Super! Countdown:
Leap, leap, leap!
summer is next. . .

Super! exclusive with Brandon Boyd page G1

Kiko Escora in the buff page F2

Karen Carpenter vs Zoolander page G3

Produced by TIM YAP
Photography: PAOLO PIÑEDA
Cover star: KIKO ESCORA

Emoticonfusion

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

ONCE again, the Pinoy has demonstrated his textual prowess to the whole world.

A very recent survey conducted by Siemens Mobile revealed to me but a simple truth: that without our cellular phones, we Filipinos feel like eunuchs in a nudist camp. The figures prove it: 65 percent of Pinoys surveyed said they would immediately rush home if they found they had forgotten their handsets. A whopping 77 percent confessed that if they didn't get a text message over a period of time, feelings of self-doubt, social alienation and underarm wetness ensue. This same group admitted that they would stare at their phones and wait with bated breath for that all-too-familiar beep and for the treasured words, "Message Received" to appear on the little screen, as though watching a flatline on a heart machine in nervous anticipation of a sharp peak to signify life restored.

Yet I don't need to consult any survey to tell me that our society has raised mobile phone dependence to unsurpassed heights. This phone-omenon has in fact spurred a behavioral evolution quite unique to our culture. Naturally, we have adapted in response to such constraints in many amusing ways.

Text in the City

I, for one, have been involved in one too many bizarre threesomes that have transpired in cosmopolitan cafés. It looks deceptively intimate from the outside window: two people who want to catch up on life, love, and the latest "American Idol" idiot, decide to talk over steaming cappuccinos during an afternoon break. Between sips, I would relay the highlights of my weekend. But just when I'm about to hit the juicy parts, I'd be cut short by the sharp, two-toned bleep of a text message sent to my friend's mobile. A silent pause ensues in order for my friend to reply, his thumbs moving about the keypad with the speed of an illegal DVD peddler being chased by a cop. Within that break, my mind would wander off to Tijuana and back. I would then proceed to hum the entire "*Otso-Otso*" in my head, make eye contact with all the good-looking guys passing by, mull over the formulas of Goldbach's Conjecture, ponder the mysteries of Lauren Izersky's hairdo, understand the space-time continuum as explored by Einstein, make plans to hit the waves in Siargao in September, reflect on the Eight-Fold path of Buddhism, and figure out certain scenes of David Lynch's "Mulholland Drive." By the time my friend has finished with his little texting diversion, my original anecdote is nowhere to be found, like a straight guy in a Cher concert.

When a kiss is not a kiss

In the valiant attempt to best convey feelings within the 300-character limit in a text message window, there has arisen a new breed of faces constructed with the lesser known characters of the keyboard's dramatis personae. They are called emoticons, or emotional icons, which require of the recipient some degree of imagination to discern the intended meaning.

I still remember when my Scandinavian friends back in Sydney made me the object of their hysterics, all because of a well-intended, texted "smiley face." It turns out that one man's smiley face (Ü) is another people's "um-

EMOTICONFUSION/ F2

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Does Kiko Escora paint in the buff?

Tim Yap

ONE look, and his passion is set ablaze. He smolders her with hugs and kisses until she gets frenzied with excitement. He becomes unstoppable, like a mad man on a rampage. She screams for more. They reach the peak of pleasure. He lights a cigarette and inhales deeply. He is sated and satisfied ... until something else whets his appetite.

This is how Kiko Escora makes love to his canvas.

His South Syquia apartment is filled with random knickknacks that serve as aphrodisiac for his senses. One wall showcases a visual pop-political assemblage of Oriental icons Mao Zedong and Kim Jong-il on their way to McDonald's. Another painting focuses on a woman with a face covered in wallpaper cuttings. "Most of the art pieces here deal with identity."

"I am very much interested in people's identities and relationships—or the lack of it," Kiko says. He likes taking notice of how people are connected and yet fragmented. "It's normal for everybody to wear masks. Everybody puts on a facade—it's part of our modern lifestyle—for me it's what makes people interesting. I'm just the observer."

Multi-colored *taka* horses by Ikoy Ricio (papier mache numbers from Paete inspired by those seen atop a jeepney) are strewn on the floor of Kiko's private playground. His work area is littered with dog-eared books and fashion magazines and other inspired modern works from his peers.

Beholding his sanctuary and talking to the artist himself, one can perceive a sharp sense of clarity and color.

The pop quiz question remains, does Kiko Escora paint in the nude?

"I'm okay with exposing myself—bringing forth my vulnerability—for me it's a form of freedom.

What do you do?

Painter/ visual artist

What are you working on now?

Paintings for a solo show at Utterly Art Gallery in Singapore and our assignment for Jojie Lloren's workshop on basic pattern making

What makes you happy?

Friends, work, music, dancing, coffee, good movies, shooting range at Timezone

Favorite song?

"Animal Nitrate" by Suede, "So Long Without You" by Bent, "Seven Nation Army" by the White Stripes, "There's a Light that Never Goes Out" by the Smiths

What keeps you awake at night?

Maladjusted body clock

If you had to be locked up in a room all day, where would it be?

My studio. Need to work on my next show already.

(Kiko Escora/ Body Portraits, opens today, 4:30 to 7 p.m., at The Drawing Room, Metropolitan Avenue, Makati City.

'I'm okay with exposing myself, bringing forth my vulnerability. For me it's a form of freedom.'

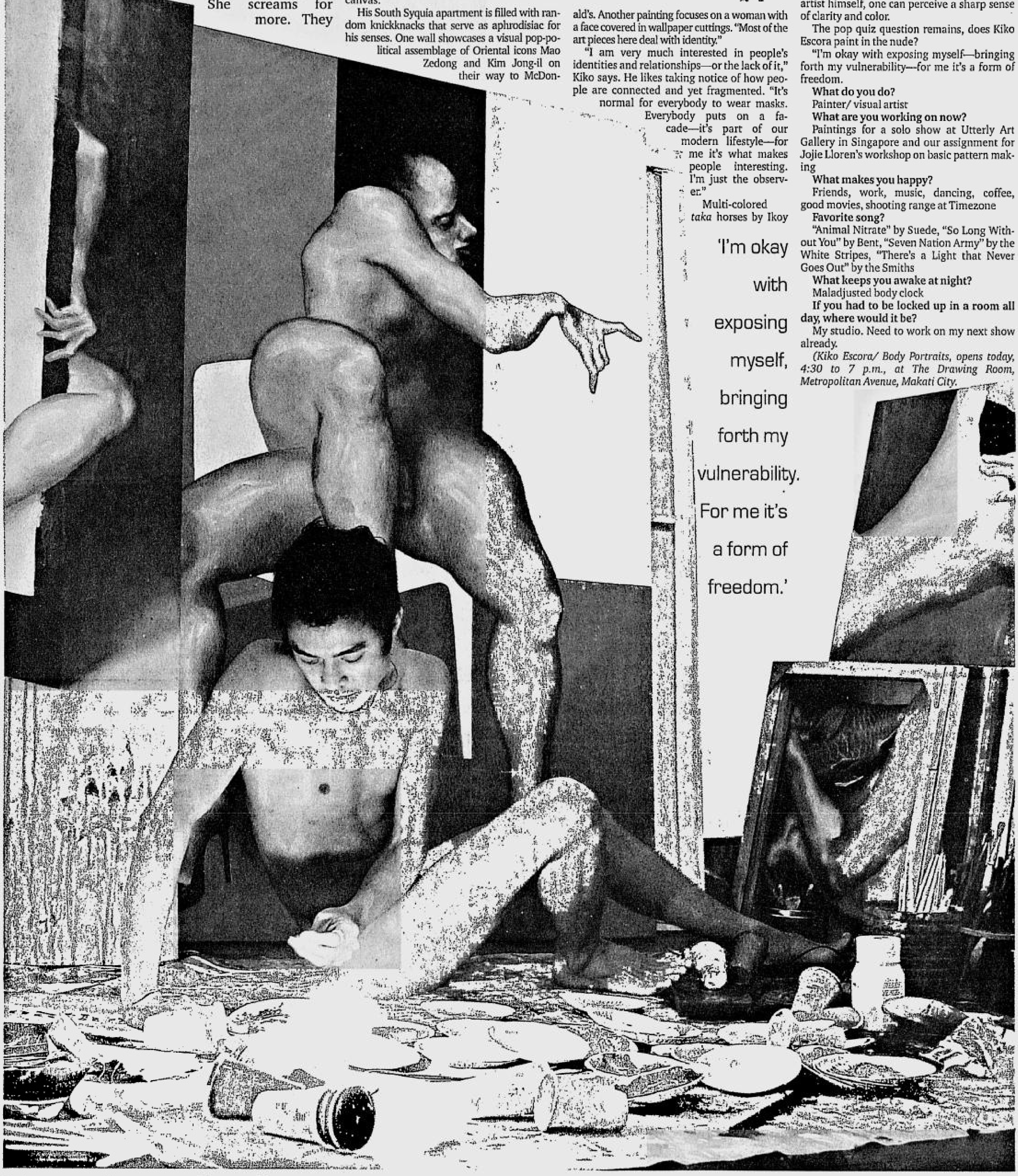

PHOTO BY PAOLO PIÑEDA

Emoticonfusion

On the screen of the ubiquitous cell phone, a kiss is not simply a kiss and a smile is not simply a smile.

From page F1

laut," or letter of the Nordic alphabet. My Swedish and Norwegian pals thought it was symptomatic of a Filipino texting Tourette syndrome of sorts each time I sent them messages infested with umlauts. I tried to defend my Pinoy symbol of gladness, accusing them of being unimaginative louts who couldn't discern the broad grin in that cute little punctuated face. Apparently the "proper" and universal smiley face should be :) or the more nasal :-) Would you believe that silly debate went on for almost an hour?

Imagine the first time, when I was still a texting neophyte many years back, that I received the character permutation :* I stretched my imagination to its limits, figuring out whether I had in fact received a mangled mis-text, the symbol of a splattered fly on my screen, or even a renegade Space Invader reincarnated on my mobile phone. What the emoticon actually conveyed was—what? A kiss? Yes, indeed, it is a bizarre day when a most intimate gesture of love and romance is reduced to a colon and an asterix.

So apparently these days, a kiss is not just a kiss, and a smile is not just a smile. Neither is a sad face just a sad face; it's a colon and an open parenthesis :(And neither is a wink just a wink; it's a semi-colon and a close parenthesis ;) And neither is a *belat* just a *belat*; it's a colon and the letter "P" or :P Thank God they haven't yet invented an emoticon to convey sighs, feelings of guilty pleasure, starry-eyed sentimentality, or extreme satisfaction after consuming shrimp dumplings at Hap Chan.

Breakdowns

All this reminds me of a wise little observation that my brother made: "In the attempt to bring about better communication, technology has only caused a certain degree of misunderstanding."

And how true that is, since nowadays, there is so much emphasis placed on such emoticons, that many times its absence in a text message is enough to spark fights or fits of insanity. I know someone who loses sleep when her current object of affection fails to accessorize his "K" with a smiley. Heck, I admit that I also break in a sweat when I receive a mere "tnx" and a vacuous thereafter, without a constellation of two dots and a half moon to light up the space. On quite a few occasions, I've gotten into friction with good friends only because when I was in a rush, I'd text back, insensitively enough, "Ya I know"—without the softening smiley. Those three words were misinterpreted as a caustic, know-it-all response conveying utter irritation, when in fact I was actually in the midst of a maddening traffic jam with no time to blindly look for a proper emoticon to send.

Textosterone

These days, even the act of courtship has become a textual affair. I was floored when I first heard about the phenomenon called "textiquette," or the unwritten rules that outlined when a guy should text a girl after acquiring her number. The rules cover how he should word it so he'd seem "interested but not desperate," the frequency over a specific period, and the most acceptable time frame in which a girl should respond and still retain a sense of mystery. I say, whatever happened to calling? (Which is, I keep reminding myself, the real use of a cell phone—not as an alarm clock, calendar, mini-camera or calculator).

The generally accepted belief as to why texting, over calling, has become such a phenomenon in this country is because it's way cheaper. In other countries, it's the other way around. Yet I think there's a vastly unexplored reason behind all this that tells a lot about us Pinoys.

The thing about texting is that it has its own version of Filipino Time. The intervals between messages offer a person more time to compose a response, making up for a lack of inborn wit. Male admirers not exactly blessed with golden tongues become incarnations of Cyrano de Bergerac as long as they have texting capabilities, a little time, and a good friend beside them playing poetic coach.

Then there's the impersonality of the medium that makes us more brazen in spite of our face-saving tendencies. Without a face-to-face encounter, or even just the sound of a voice, it's easier to lie to your boss and say you can't come to work because you've contracted dengue, when in fact the return of Survivor All Stars is what's keeping you in bed.

Emoticonnections

As I gaze into the liquid crystal display of my message box, searching for clues that foretell the future of modern communication, what do I see? Actually, I see one word staring at me at the bottom of the screen: "Options." Indeed, it is because we are endowed with options that we are free to choose how we express ourselves in the modern world. Sure, we adapt to the realities of grinning, frowning and winking letters, and come to understand abbreviated words of affection. Yet I will always, handsets down, prefer to see a real, beaming smile, would rather wipe away a falling tear on a face, or hear a hearty, uncontrollable laugh, to know that I truly understand.

(E-mail me your smileys, winkies or theories on who'd win Survivor All Stars at: inca_orange@yahoo.com)

Retro Lane

Lemon-aide

Giselle Segovia

I KNOW I shouldn't, but I still get shocked whenever I see kids as young as 14 years old partying among adults. I know times change. Indeed. When I was that age, heading to McDonald's after school with friends was already considered "gimmick." And if you did it often enough, you might even have been considered "cool." Strolling in malls and hanging out in bowling alleys (remember Skybowl?) spelled young adult buoyancy during my time. I know there's no comparison; the difference of then and now may be summarized in Aerosmith's words: "It's Amazing!"

SOAP SUDS. Iza Calzado and Val delos Santos

One observation that should be made, though, is that kids certainly look better now! They appear more mature and carry themselves with that I-know-more-than-the-measly-number-of-years-I-have-been-existing air. I really don't remember being as picturesque in my teenage years. They don't even have acne!

Recalling an incident a couple of months ago ... of a beautiful young woman I chanced upon lounging in the ladies' room during one of those huge tent parties: It was around midnight and she was chatting with two other women, and the way they carried on, they must have been college friends currently kept apart by abusive work schedules.

SIBLING LOVE. Mike and Bea Constantino

The beautiful young woman's phone rang and she sprang up. "I have to go! My mom is already outside and she's freaking out." One of her friends asked, "What year are you in now again?" "Just a sophomore in high school! Bye!" she said before rushing out to meet her worried mommy.

It made me smile to know that while kids invariably change, parents rarely do.

Saturday, February 28

You cannot, must not, miss Axe Pulse's "The Leap Year Party." Four of Manila's crème de la crème djs will playing tonight at a party that is definitely a first. NBK's Manolet Dario, Kevin Ruiz, BBC's Scrambled Edge and BIG-FISH's TC are all slated to set the moon on fire as they brand the box with their unique styles. So put on your dancing shoes and practice your hip swing. It's at 9 p.m. till sunrise, at the Premiere THX Cinema (formerly Louie's). Also to check out Sound Elemental—electronic music in its purest form—starting at 11 p.m., in Ebisu, Eastwood City Walk. If you have any qs, text dj Cao on 091_845 ... gotcha!

Sunday, February 29

Seize your last chance to view Maria Taniguchi's "Tsunami," a solo exhibit. Last day today, at the Finale Art gallery, the Artwalk, Level 4 SM Megamall Bldg. A.

Monday, March 1

Enjoy a laid-back night at Capone's. They usually have a great band playing—Monday is as good a day as any. Try their seriously, deliciously deadly Longga Burger and potato chips. But good luck if you're on a diet!

Tuesday, March 2

Traipse your way to Greenbelt 3 and go inside Absinth—but only if you enjoy acoustic soul and R & B music. If you don't, you can always step out and leave. And miss out on all the fun. "Flow" features Artstrong with Raw Assembly, live at 9 p.m. For more info, call Absinth, 757-4966.

Wednesday, March 3

Happy Anniversary to my mom and dad! Of course none of you are invited.

However, you are welcome to bask in Temple Bar and Restaurant's Latin night. Get the sizzling midweek vibe in "Brasileria," featuring the samba and Latin grooves of Sabor Latino, and dj Randy's Latin House mixes. *Vamos!* Curious cat? Ring the place, 757-4813.

Thursday, March 4

For struggling poets out there ... (sorry!) Filipinas Heritage Library presents "The Eye of Writing: Poetry Workshop for Beginners." Participants will be guided through reading and writing activities, as well as interactions. Fee is P1,700 inclusive of certificates and handouts. For more details, call 892-1801. The Filipinas Heritage Library is located on Makati Avenue.

Friday, March 5

Be part of the first audience to watch the gala night of "Menopause, the Musical." Bahaghari Productions has teamed up with Music Museum for this production to celebrate March, Women's Month. Meet the Power Woman (Mitch Valdes), the Earth Woman (Nanette Inventor), the Soap Star (Leah Navarro) and the Housewife (Sheila Francisco), all in a state of "silent passage." Veteran director Leo Rialp directs. The play runs till April 3, weekends at the Music Museum in Greenhills. For tickets, call 721-0635.

The word for the bored:

"The best smell in the world is that of the man that you love."

—Jennifer Aniston on husband Brad Pitt (Who cares how he smells if he looks like that?)

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'Kuya' director knows what's cool

Dominic Zapanta isn't a name usually associated with big screen movies. A veteran of TV shows, he has been at the helm of a variety of programs such as Twin Hearts, TGIS and Nuts Entertainment. But when he was finally given a call by Regal Films' Mother Lily Monteverde to meg the latest teen flick, 'Kuya', he was eager to do the job.

"Kuya was a particularly long shoot, in terms of Filipino movies," says Dominic. "We started production in September last year, and that went through to early this year, though with mostly post production work. The most difficult challenge was to get the cast members together." The cast of 'Kuya' includes some of the hottest young stars in local showbiz today- Richard Gutierrez, Oyo Boy Sotto, Railey Valeroso, Maxene Magalona, Chynna Ortaleza, Angel Locsin, Cogie Domingo, Danilo Barrios, James Blanco, Alicia Mayer and alluring actress Aubrey Miles. "These guys and gals have busy schedules, and so do I. It took a lot of effort to get us all together to shoot the movie."

But what was it like to handle such a large group of performers? "No problem," Dominic readily says. "I'm used to working with (the kids). I've actually worked with each of them on different opportunities in the past."

It was also beneficial to the movie that Zapanta, 32, was a young director who could still keep in touch with the fickleness of today's youth. "Young people follow the coolest person around, so that's what I had to become most of the time. I had to be the coolest dresser, the one who knows what's 'in' and what's hot. That's the way young people are these days. If the coolest person said Sony Ericsson phones are cool, young people would rush to get them. If the coolest person said pagers are cool, pagers would be back in style again."

Sony Ericsson
Games

Of course, Kuya won't be featuring pagers. The movie does feature the latest Sony Ericsson cellphones in many key scenes. The Sony Ericsson T230 is a compact, colorful and fun phone, loaded with features and priced within the reach of students and beginning employees. It features full SMS and MMS functions, chat and email, polyphonic tones and the popular V-Rally racing game.

Other Sony Ericsson phones appearing in the movie include the Z600, with accessories such as the gameboard and replaceable Style Up covers, and the Z200.

For Zapanta, directing Kuya was a great experience, and is a way of imparting an important message to the youth of today. "We never know when we may reach a crossroad in our life, so we should always try to choose carefully. These choices affect not only our lives, but those of everyone around us."

'Kuya' has been given a B-rating by the Film Review Board and is now showing in theaters nationwide.

COURTYARDS AT PORTOFINO BY BRITTANY
UNIQUE ITALIAN INSPIRED LIVING

Brittany Corporation's Portofino, the decidedly upscale, Italian-themed, residential and commercial enclave just a few minutes away from the Alabang Town Center, is now building on the success of its first four phases called Portofino Heights, with the next phase of the development offering courtyard residences.

With all lots in Portofino Heights sold out in less than a year, the courtyard units will enable limited numbers of other future residents to partake of a unique way of life that only a thoroughly planned, high-end community from Brittany can offer. The various phases of Portofino, located along the recently opened Las Piñas-Muntinlupa-Laguna-Cavite Link Road, is envisioned for families whose members are citizens of the world, their homes eloquent testimony to an elegant yet comfortable lifestyle.

Portofino by Brittany offers a limited number of Courtyard homes, laid out in a unique design in which each home features a courtyard within a courtyard, a first among residential communities in the country.

Portofino (Italian for "fine gateway") is one of four ongoing developments by Brittany Corporation, the pioneer in envisioning and building high-end, master-planned communities, each inspired by a distinctive theme. Living in Portofino will be evocative of the happy life in sunny Italy, where it is celebrated with exuberance every day. The original Portofino, a lovely seaport town in southern Italy with rolling, hilly terrain, a river and much greenery, is Brittany's inspiration for the multi-phase development project.

Portofino's courtyard homes are a one-of-a-kind application of the courtyard-within-a-courtyard concept, an ingenious design exclusive to Brittany. The concept involves all models each having its own courtyard, while being part of a cluster of homes configured within a bigger courtyard.

Each courtyard home, in the typical Italian fashion of such residences, revolves around a courtyard in the center, with terra cotta and stucco as well as pronounced arches and layers that bring on warm, cheerful feelings. The main foyer allows access to the rooms on the ground level through the courtyard. The windows gracing the balconies permit light from outdoors to enter, while the open space in the center of each villa affords natural cooling against tropical temperatures. Arcades supported by columns, fountains and gardens will accent the soothing view of each courtyard from the halls within. The courtyard space of each home will be perfect for entertaining company or as a private area where family members may simply relax together. Some of the courtyard residences will feature charming *casitas*, rooms on the ground level ideal for staying guests.

Reminiscent of an Italian setting, the Portofino courtyard residences will boast streets of cobblestone and adornments consisting of statues, fountains and benches.

In keeping with Brittany's faithfully observed architectural and other development guidelines to maintain the integrity of each community's theme, the courtyard units at Portofino, clustered in cozy communities, are available in four models. Named after European masters, the models are the Cezanne (floor area 193 sq. m.), the Monet (floor area 233 sq. m.), the Raphael (floor area 247 sq. m.), and the Rembrandt (floor area 260 sq. m.). Selling prices range from Php 7.8 million to Php15 million for home and lot packages.

While adhering to architectural guidelines, Brittany is careful about striking a balance, not impinging on the personal preferences and tastes of residents. Like other Brittany offerings, the courtyard residences of Portofino are meant for families with discerning taste.

Each Courtyard home at Brittany's Portofino is highlighted by an inner courtyard, maximizing use of space as well as natural light and ventilation. The design is inspired by Italian homes that are structured around a courtyard, "bring the outdoors, indoors" with arcades, benches and fountains.

Each residence will be a jewel, magnificently designed and built, giving the best that life can offer to its happy owner, the lord of his very own manor and proud possessor of a fine home, indeed!

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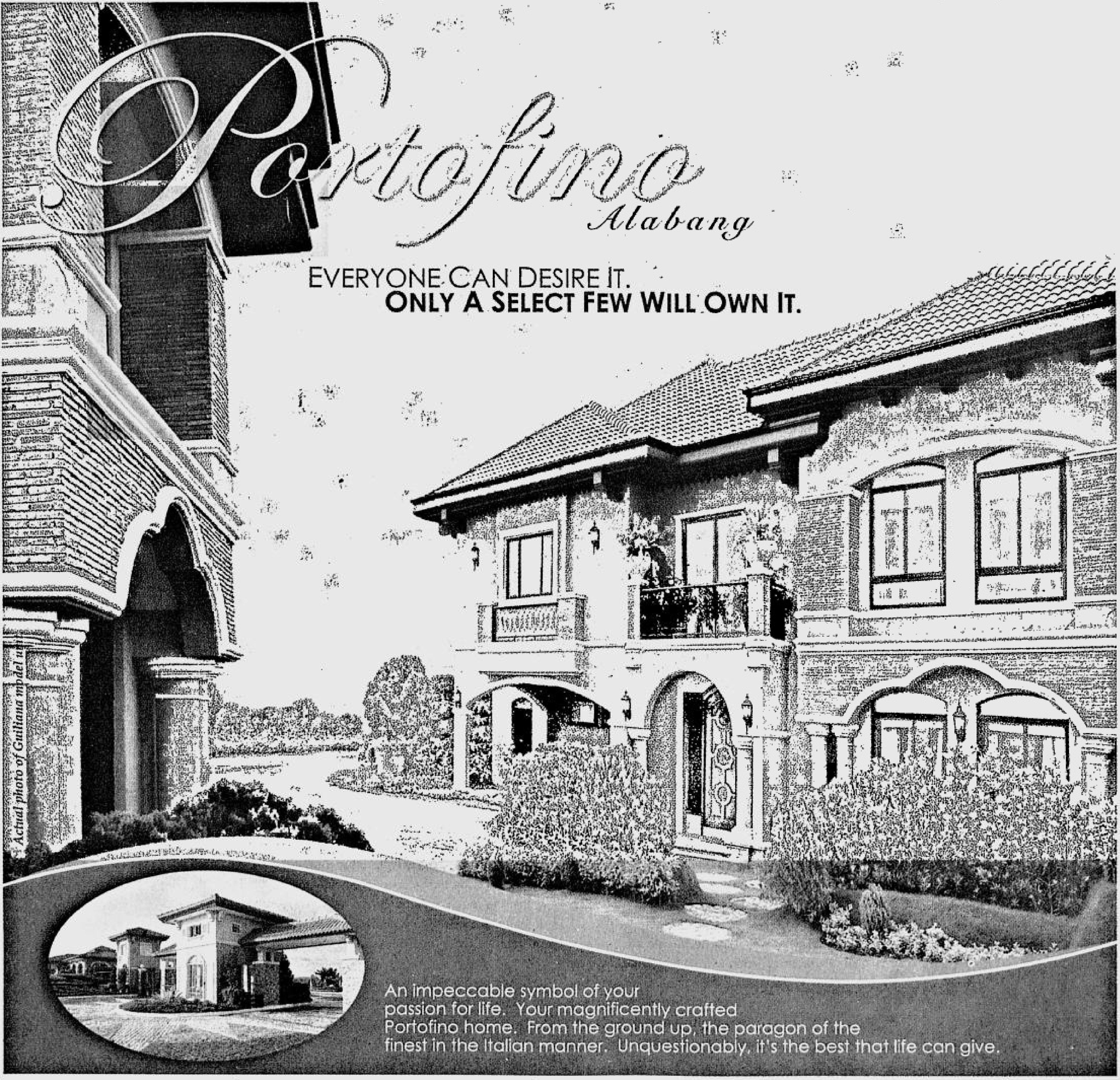
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Brittany
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SATURDAY Super

On the phone with Brandon Boyd

'Just existing is inspiring to me. It's beautiful to be alive.'

By Robby Mananquil
Contributor

TWENTY minutes on the phone with Brandon Boyd of Incubus? I thought Tim Yap, Veng Taningco of Jag Jeans, and Roslyn Reyes of Sony Philippines, were just pulling my leg.

Could I just jam with him for 20 precious minutes? Obviously not, so I started thinking up questions. Should I probe the poetry of his music? Should I ask how he creates love songs like a love-struck bard? Should I plumb the angst with which he shrieks out political protests? Should I check on what it takes to produce such tension with guitar theatrics?

No, please, fellow Incubus fans around me pleaded—could I just ask him other things? Such as? They ended up texting me their questions.

All Incubus fans know how Brandon Boyd, Mike Einzinger, Jose Padillas, Chris Kilmore (that's Dj Kilmore) and Dirk Lance (who has since been replaced by Ben Kenney of The Roots) began as high schoolers in the San Fernando Valley outpost of Calabasas grouping together.

Incubus soared to smashing success in 2001 when their sing-along, "Drive" topped the Modern Rock charts and landed in the Top 40. It is remarkable how they have evolved—and they are constantly evolving—from funk metal to nu metal, though they may detest being given tags. They reaped double-platinum awards for "Make Yourself" in 1999. Remember their Top 10 hit "Pardon Me" and "Stellar"? And who can forget their 1997 album "S.C.I.E.N.C.E." which initially hooked Incubus fans, including myself?

"Megalomaniac" definitely created a stir. Fans know that Incubus is not just music of anger and angst. There is depth and political insight in their new album, "A Crow Left of the Murder." Boyd himself declared (remember "Pistola"): "My pen is a pistola ... a patriot's weapon of choice."

Boyd can be fiery, and he can be tender as well. In "Here in My Room," a romantic balled, he says: "If the world were to fall apart/ In a fictionworthy mind/ I wouldn't change a thing/ Now that you're here/ Love is a verb/ Here in my room."

My other favorites are "Southern Girl," "Agoraphobia," and "Talk Shows on Mute."

Now with their newest member Ben Kenney, Incubus continues to spin to the top.

Super: I know you named "Morning View" after the street where you recorded your last album. Now, why "A Crow Left of the Murder?"

It's the name of the second song on the record and some of the ideas of the content of that song started to kind of sum up the general experience of being in this band for the past

ON THE PHONE/ G2

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

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[illegible]

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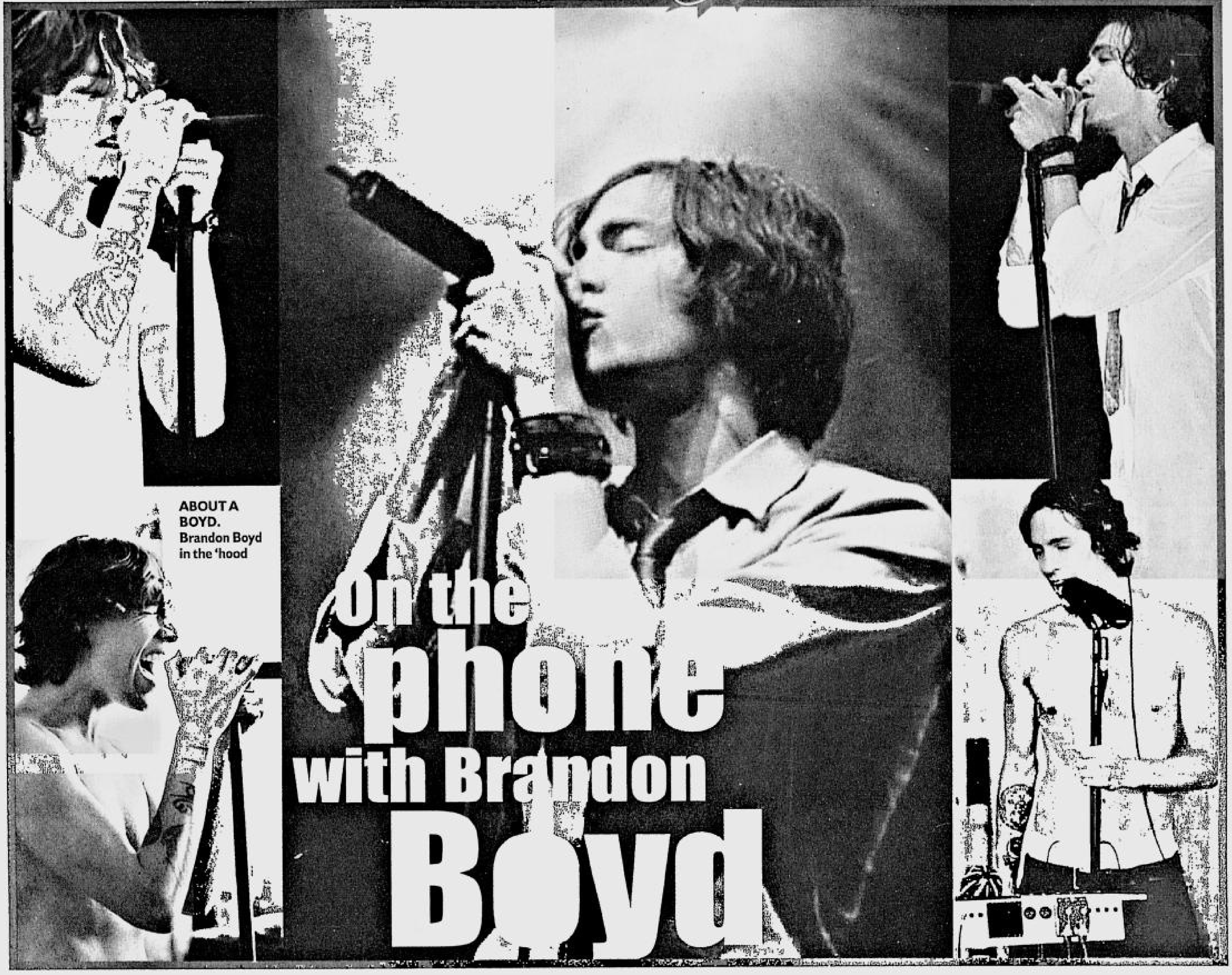


ABOUT A BOYD. Brandon Boyd in the 'hood

On the phone with Brandon Boyd

From page G1

13 years. So the metaphor of a crow left of the murder … you know, as in a crow left standing off a murder of crows. It sort of sums up the general vibe of a lot of things you could say, but there's not any one particular reason why we named the record that … there's lots.

Who would be your biggest musical influence?

Mine in particular? (As a group) we're not influenced by one type of music. I've had a lot of musical influences and they change, too, as I get older.

Yeah, I noticed that each album of Incubus is different.

Exactly. I seriously like it. I'd love to just name one person, but the closest thing would probably be either my mom or my grandpa … hahaha!

What is the greatest lesson you've learned as an artist?

Humility. Being humbled by other artists around me. It makes me want to stop sometimes, but I think most of the time it inspires me to try harder and come from more pure places in my mind and in my heart.

If you were given the chance to work with any musician dead or alive, could you think of one?

Ooow.. I could think of a lot of people … today I'll choose ah … shall we say Bjork.

What would be your top three favorite Incubus love songs?

I'd say "Here in My Room" from the new record, a song called "I Miss You" from "Make Yourself" and the very first song that we wrote as a band, "Lovesick."

Have you always liked love songs?

You know there was a time when I was kind of averse to singing love songs because it seemed that was what every song was about. I tried really hard to divert my attention to other subjects (but) I just couldn't help but be inspired by love. It's probably the most powerful thing all around us, you know. At a certain point I was just like, I'm just going to write it down.

What's on your cd changer right now?

This band called Metric from LA. Their cd's just out, um …what else is in there … Jeff Buckley live in New York, and wow … what else is in there … the Pixies' "Surfaroza."

You sing, write songs and poems, sketch, take photographs and even surf. What else do you do that we don't know?

INCUBUS FEVER HITS MANILA. From skateboards to campus to skin art, brace yourselves for some heavy rockin'

I can make a good plate of spaghetti!

What is your favorite cuisine?

I really like Japanese food!

Have you tried any Filipino dish?

Not that I'm aware of. But I will, very soon! Can you recommend anything?

Try *adobo*. It's chicken with soy sauce and vinegar.

That sounds really good! I will try that.

What are the three things you love/hate to do?

I'll start with hate. I don't want to be dictated on and so I guess you could say I don't like to put myself in a situation where I would be dictated on. I don't like being sick, though I wouldn't say that I hate it. I don't really hate a lot of things in my life so that's a tough question for me. There are a lot of things I love to do but three things would be … I love to be creative. That should encompass music, art, and anything sort of life oriented. I love to be with my girlfriend and her daughter and I love to surf.

What inspires you?

I'm inspired by so many things around me—the traffic as seen from my window, the sound of waves in the beach. I've also been inspired by aggravation and frustration, so I guess you could say that just sort of existing is inspiring to me. It's a beautiful thing to be alive.

If you could have some sort of super power, what would you choose?

I'd probably want to fly.

Why fly?

I've had a lot of flying dreams and they're the coolest. If I could do that in reality, that would be the coolest thing ever.

What's the first thing you do when you wake up?

Have a cup of coffee!

And what's the last thing at night?

I usually read.

Is there anything you still haven't achieved?

Yeah, definitely. I'd like to write more books.

So after "White Fluffy Clouds," can we expect another book anytime soon?

Yeah, I'm working on the next one. It will be a mix of art and writing. I also hope to travel to certain places that I have been before, and perhaps stay in some of those places for a while and sort of soak up the atmosphere like I've never really been able to do.

If you weren't Brandon Boyd of Incubus what do you think you'd be doing right now?

I'd probably still be pursuing art in some regard. Music is an art form. It feels like (all art) comes from the same place.

What's your dream vacation?

I actually just took one of my dream vacations last year. I went to Tavarua, Fiji with my band and my girlfriend and it was pretty amazing, with some of the best waves that any of us had ever seen. For my next dream spot, I'd probably go to the Maldives or some place in that realm.

I have a band as well (KABUTEhaN), can you give any words of wisdom and/or advice to aspiring bands such as ours?

Use your influences wisely, just stick to them as opposed to imitating them. That's the mistake that we made. It took us a while to come into our own as artists. The sooner artists concentrate on their uniqueness as individuals and as a band, the sooner their music would be worth listening to.

You will be performing here in Manila on March 12 at the CCP Open Grounds, what can your fans expect from the show?

We never played anywhere near (Manila) before. People coming to the show can expect to see a great artful memorable rock and roll concert you know… and energetic explosion.

Anything you'd like to say to all the Incubus fans?

I could go on forever. Thank you very much. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to make music and share it with you.

(Tickets to Incubus are rapidly selling at all SM Ticketnet outlets: reserved seats at P1,950, standing at P950 and P550. For inquires, call Ticketnet at 911-5555 or Icon Productions at 373-5734.)

The yawn and the restless

From page G4

according to Mattel soon realize that they are not immune to boredom. In some cases, it is the very stature of completion that generates lassitude. The only way to treat such an affliction is through aggressive therapy, or prayer. While I guarantee that reciting the rosary is a sure-fire way of beating boredom, I'm going to stick to methods that require imagination.

Meet new people. Often it is the very blanket of security we try so hard to sheath ourselves in that end up smothering us. Friends, family, colleagues and partners become fence posts demarking accustomed territories. Once in awhile, it's good to go AWOL and confirm that there *are* six billion other people on this planet, and a fifth of them are actually interesting. Sometimes, when I am cloyed by everything familiar, I like to speak to unusual types—like transvestite prostitutes. Their refreshing perspectives, outspokenness, and torn stockings always make my day. Their opinions—"If it itches, it can't be good," or "I'd vote for Roco but he doesn't have the political machinery"—are nuggets of urban wisdom that I fondly collate as Whore D'oeuvres. Fishball vendors are also deft gurus of street philosophy. Freddy, who plies his trade along Pasong Tamo, muses about the existential phenomenon of a sauce that is spicy *and* sweet at the same time. Step outside and explore the neighborhood.

Go to new places. Travel provides respite from the monotony of regular activity, but it is a remedy usually associated with expense. While Florence and Casablanca appeal to our souls, our wallets plead otherwise. But so what if you can't make it across an ocean? We've got over 7,000 islands and I've been to only three! With the appropriate attitude, every destination becomes an adventure. Last year I journeyed to the magical kingdom of Divisoria, where wondrous behemoths blocked intersections and mischievous elves offered to guard my chariot. This year, I intend to conquer the forbidden lands of Quiapo in search of pirated videos and the ultimate in Chinese cuisine—The Return of Le Ching. The truly nomadic require an inquisitive spirit and a fertile imagination more than a hefty bank account.

Try new things. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. I learned this first, not from Newton, but from a girl who kicked me in the balls after I called attention to her moustache. While I do not recommend new affairs of the excruciatingly painful nature, embarking on the unexpected yields interesting results. The important thing is to *never* do anything of a harmful nature or with malicious intent. Last year, I also read the Qur'an, learned to tango, and discovered the joys of karaoke clubs.This year, I hope to master the art of telling the truth. Do something unexpected and surprise yourself.

Interrupt your life with regular doses of the unfamiliar, be it people, places or actions. The only thing worse than succumbing to boredom is becoming accustomed to it. The day we cease to challenge the status quo, the day we surrender to paralysis of the soul, is the day we become less than human. It is they who give in to the cold and stop moving that eventually die of frostbite. Life is a spectacle waiting to be witnessed, and I'm pretty sure God wants us to discover the outrageous behind the mundane.

EIGHT hours old and already tired of life

Whatever reasons the Creator may have, we should look at our moments of boredom as opportunities to be imaginative, as symptoms that our lives need reinvigorating and affirmation. We should view these times of tedium as signs from the Divine, sublime smoke signals urging us to be more human than we currently are.

The next time you get bored, clasp your hands together, raise your eyes heavenward and proclaim, "Hallelujah! I'm bored again!"

(E-mail author at bohemiansamurai@yahoo.com)

Manorexia

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

"HEY, I think I look really fat. Damn those glazed donuts!" said one fitness freak while pinching a non-existent love handle.

"Are you kidding? You're lean! Trust me, you look fine," replied the other.

"Yeah? I just got these great Paperdenims and no way would I want my tummy to look like it's hanging out or something. Nope, not me!"

When it comes to rocking pricey low-rise jeans, I guess the presence of a nasty gut is indeed a valid concern.

No one wants to look like 10 pounds of sugar in a five-pound sack, but this peer counseling session for the terminally diet-conscious did not take place between two women in a restaurant-of-the-minute's powder room or during a girls-only afternoon of power shopping. I overheard this particular exchange in the men's locker room of my health club. In fact, the central character in this low-fat anecdote is a perfectly normal and reasonably toned 19-year-old dude.

Shocked? Awed? Don't be. This is the reality of being a young adult male in the 21st century.

Feeling fat when you're actually fine, even thin, is a default female condition. How many times have you seen the fairer species hold a hand mirror to their booty and ask if that region is crossing over to J.Lo territory? (Instead of busting out with Sir Mix-A-Lot's "Baby Got Back," I suggest gluing your pie hole shut or replying with the more diplomatic and all-encompassing "Never!") However, as an offshoot of metrosexuality, this paranoia has tiptoed into the knuckle-dragging, beer-guzzling segment of the population. As though to atone for years of inhaling Extra Value Meals, most men now treat exercise as the new clubbing. Slugging it out on the bench and suffering through hundreds of ab crunches just to look and feel good, it's a safe bet that guys are more vain than girls. And apart from being prone to checking themselves out on any reflective surface, men by nature are also more competitive.

Zoolander generation

If Karen Carpenter was the first lady of anorexia, then Derek Zoolander is the pin-up boy for manorexia. Zoolander may be a lot older than most of us, but he represents the current rage for single-digit body fat percentages which, more often than not, comes hand in hand with the desire to de-flab. How can you tell if you're manorexic? Here's a profile:

1) You make up for that last meal you had by parking yourself on the cross-trainer for six hours or until you pass out, whichever comes first. You consider the numbness in your legs "a good sign."

2) You skip dates with your hot girlfriend to clock in some more time at the bench with your other date, the gym instructor.

3) Despite a US government warning, you pop Hydroxycut capsules like Tic-Tacs. Who cares about the palpitations?

4) You like Big Macs but prefer them without the dressing, bun and shredded veggies. And you pat the oil off the patty.

5) Your dinnertime repartee with loved ones is limited to debates on "Celltech vs. Nitrotech." You always win, of course, since they have no clue what you're talking about.

Piss contest

Men are cutthroat and treat everything like a piss contest, so fitness is fair game, too. With an all-or-nothing approach to life, impressionable gym rats can be plagued by this male body dysmorphic disorder just by observing the behavior pattern of established manorexics. Whether it involves abs of stone or biceps the size of coconuts, no dude in his right mind wants to finish last in the race for a ripped body. Hauling dumbbells, barbells, and small cars—name it—in order to look better than the next Joe is worth the agony because the tale of the tape tells everything.

It also doesn't help that the best men's fashion of the moment—grazing closer to the body and altogether less forgiving of flab—is light years away from the baggy FUBU stuff that "kept it real" for most of the early 1990s. Unlike women, men can wear only a few items so the pressure to look good is even greater. Our choices are limited to fit, cut and color, in that exact order, so men need more bounce per ounce.

All for youth

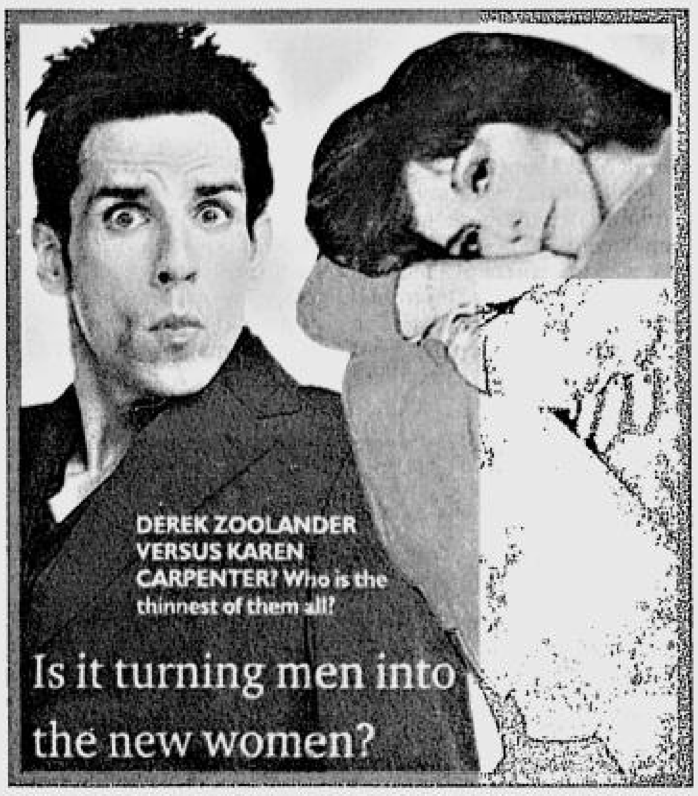
Tom Ford said that being thin is the key to youth, but what does a fortysomething queer designer have in common with straight guys in their teens and 20s? It's this: An evolved man wants to look hot not only when he's clothed but also when he decides to drop trou. Whereas crappy magazines bombard girls with pointers on "How to be your own goddess," men's titles zero in on turning one's body into a dream machine with captions like "Snag six-pack abs!" After all, the ideal depiction of energy and youth these days is an Abercrombie and Fitch ad-good-looking boys and girls spending an eternal summer chilling by a lake in New England.

Sniffing a trend in 2000, the publishers of Men's Health turned out the high school equivalent of their main title, the teen spin-off MH-18. Backing a total and almost evangelical approach to fitness and well-being, MH-18 laid the foundation for a leaner and meaner Generation Y while dealing with other age-appropriate issues like school and dating. Unfortunately, this junior health bible had no more than a five-season newsstand run due to a lack of advertisers. Despite the short ride, MH-18 was able to put the word out that teenage dudes want to eat right, buff up and look good as well. Had it stuck around long enough, I'm sure that magazine could've cashed in on the new surge in male vanity today.

Private war

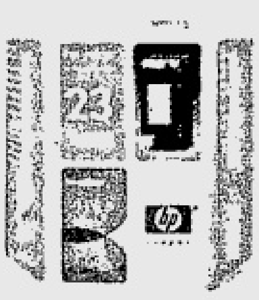
Now that the quest for everlasting youth has turned fitness into a private war, young guys curb their bad habits before they turn into beer bellies. Nutrition labels have become weapons of math instruction for those, manorexic or otherwise, who were previously not accustomed to counting calories and watching their cholesterol. Commitment to a carb- and/or fat-free existence is a shocker no more, and neither is staying hungry in gentle splendor (the Atkins Diet and Kriya, respectively). Aping an Ethiopian food shortage, even manly men like Ben Affleck have embraced these forms of caloric deprivation with the intention of achieving optimum health.

It used to be that weight, fitness and body issues were girly obsessions, but manorexia has changed all that. I never thought that normal and already-lanky guys could see themselves in such a funhouse-mirror way since we were originally programmed to eat like hogs, and wear that skill like a badge of honor. Being diet-conscious is one thing, but actually revealing specific details about it is another. With normal guys learning to flex their feelings together with their muscles, are the gender lines blurring? Is manorexia turning men into the new women?



DEREK ZOOLANDER VERSUS KAREN CARPENTER? Who is the thinnest of them all?

Is it turning men into the new women?



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1st Draw March 19, 2004	GMA/LUZON and VIS/MIN	March 15, 2004 (store close)	(7) Nike GCs worth PhP 2,500.00 (1) Rudy Project Kerosene Shades (1) Nokia 3200 (1) Home Entertainment System from Sony (DAV-SA30, TV-BT21N40)
2nd Draw April 21, 2004	GMA/LUZON and VIS/MIN	April 15, 2004 (store close)	(7) Creative LX200 MP3 Player (2) HP IPAQ h2210 Pocket PC (1) Sony Ericsson P900
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0159, Series of 2004.

The yawn and the restless

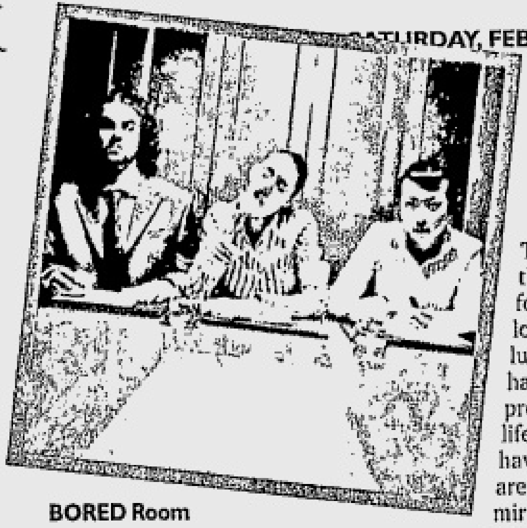
DEAR Man About Town,

I am BORED with my life. I shouldn't really be complaining because I know many people who are worse off. I have a steady job, a fairly functional family, good friends, and a girlfriend whom I love. But sometimes I feel like dropping everything and just going some place where nobody knows me, so I can start over. I know this is not practical (and I will probably never want to leave my present life), but I think about it all the time. Is this normal? What should I do?

Man about town

Chuck Dy

> We should view boredom as a sublime smoke signal urging us to be more human than we currently are



BORED Room

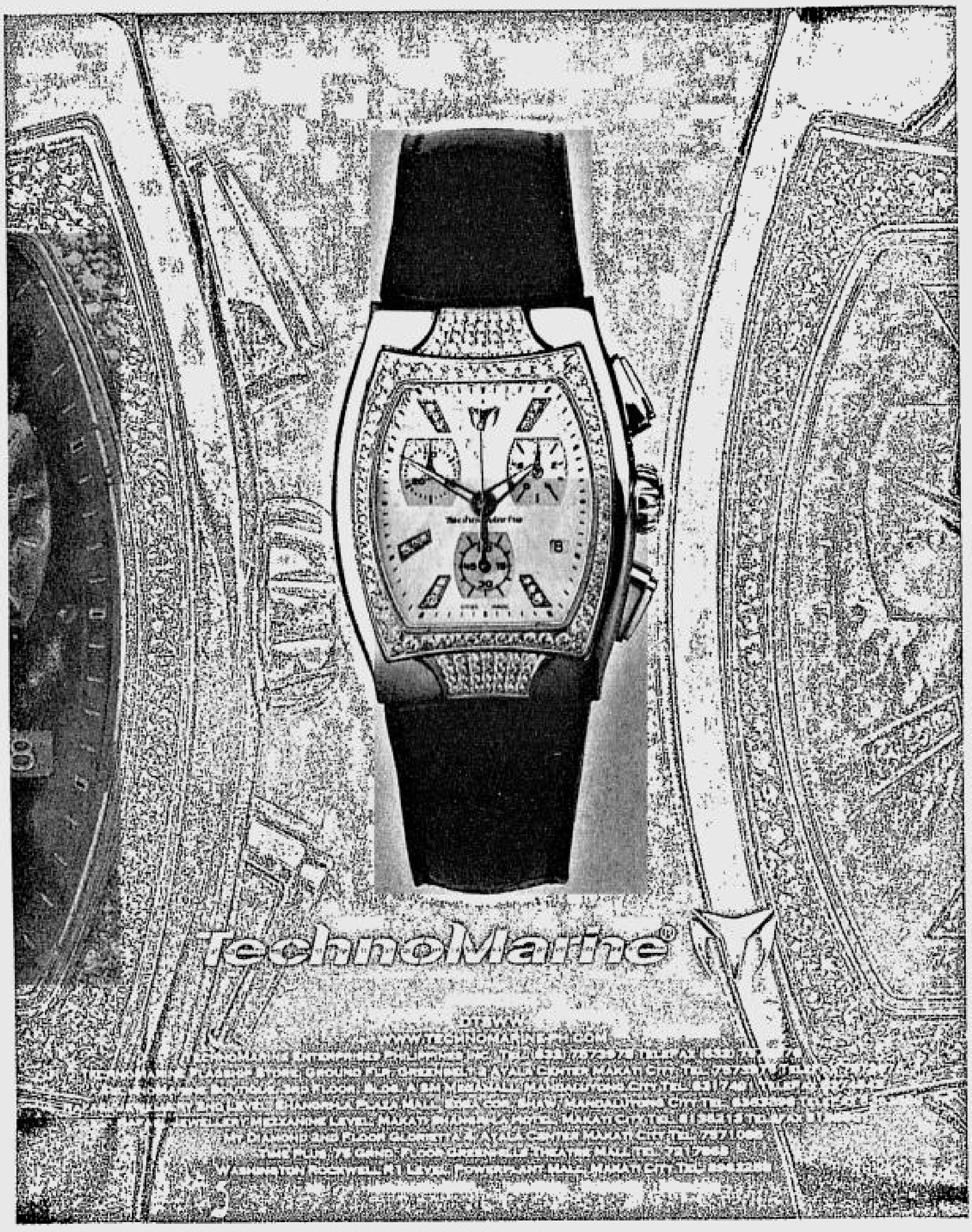
A RECENT study on mental health attributed an increasing number of suicide attempts to depression stemming from boredom. This should explain my predilection toward self-mutilation whenever I hear a Britney Spears song on radio. I had always assumed it was due to hypnosis or subconscious suggestions back-masked on her records: "Hit me (and yourself), baby one more time (harder)!"

The study suggests that human beings, for all their technological advances and ludicrous luxuries, have not *really* improved their lifestyles. Today, we have machines that are capable of the miraculous, sciences that expound on the previously inexplicable, and women who enjoy porn as much as men do. But are we happy? It is fallacious to expect that we're getting better at this game called Life just because we've been playing it for so very long. For goodness' sake, people, compare Elton John then to Elton John now. That is not progress.

Webster defines "boredom" as the state of being bored. Thanks a lot, Webster. But it is not so much a state as it is a gradual process of accumulating ennui, unnecessary habits and unhealthy perspectives, resulting in a general listlessness or, worse, a crippling apathy towards our surroundings. It is a cancer spawned by anonymous factors and its victims are legion—students chewing idly on their pencils, lovers dozing off prematurely, clergy impatient for the service to end, and call center employees waiting for death. It's like a movie where everybody waits for a punch line that never comes.

So you're weary, don't know why, and wonder what to do about it? A common misconception is that boredom results from a deficiency or dysfunction. But even those who adhere to the tenets of the perfect life as prescribed in the Gospel

THE YAWN/ G2



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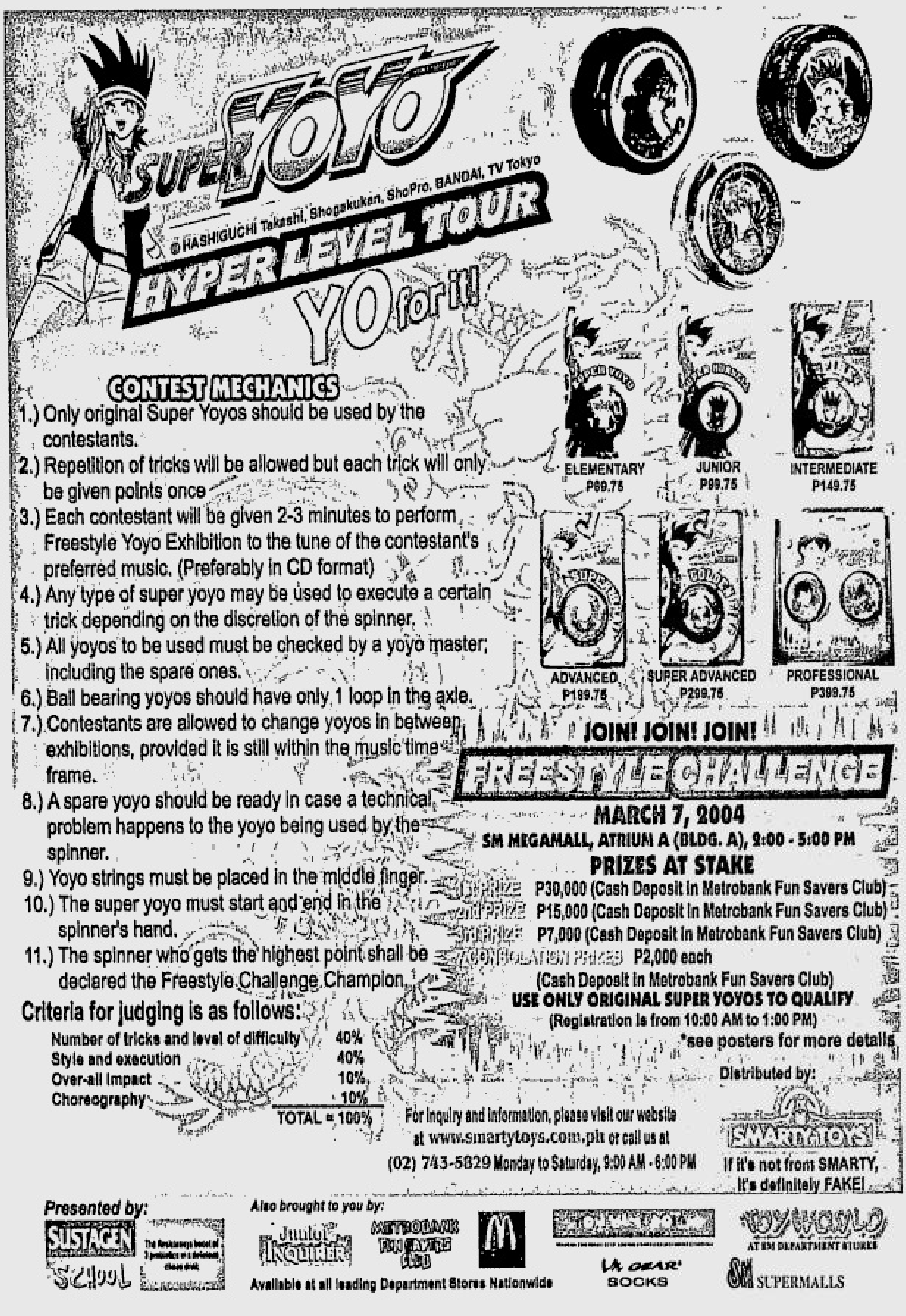

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CONTEST MECHANICS

1.) Only original Super Yoyos should be used by the contestants.
2.) Repetition of tricks will be allowed but each trick will only be given points once
3.) Each contestant will be given 2-3 minutes to perform Freestyle Yoyo Exhibition to the tune of the contestant's preferred music. (Preferably in CD format)
4.) Any type of super yoyo may be used to execute a certain trick depending on the discretion of the spinner.
5.) All yoyos to be used must be checked by a yoyo master; including the spare ones.
6.) Ball bearing yoyos should have only 1 loop in the axle.
7.) Contestants are allowed to change yoyos in between exhibitions, provided it is still within the music time frame.
8.) A spare yoyo should be ready in case a technical problem happens to the yoyo being used by the spinner.
9.) Yoyo strings must be placed in the middle finger.
10.) The super yoyo must start and end in the spinner's hand.
11.) The spinner who gets the highest point shall be declared the Freestyle Challenge Champion.

Criteria for judging is as follows:

Number of tricks and level of difficulty	40%
Style and execution	40%
Over-all impact	10%
Choreography	10%
TOTAL =	100%

JOIN! JOIN! JOIN!
FREESTYLE CHALLENGE
MARCH 7, 2004
SM MEGAMALL, ATRIUM A (BLDG. A), 2:00 - 5:00 PM
PRIZES AT STAKE
1st PRIZE P30,000 (Cash Deposit in Metrobank Fun Savers Club)
2nd PRIZE P15,000 (Cash Deposit in Metrobank Fun Savers Club)
3rd PRIZE P7,000 (Cash Deposit in Metrobank Fun Savers Club)
CONSOLATION PRIZES P2,000 each
(Cash Deposit in Metrobank Fun Savers Club)
USE ONLY ORIGINAL SUPER YOYOS TO QUALIFY
(Registration is from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM)
*see posters for more details

For inquiry and information, please visit our website at www.smartytoys.com.ph or call us at (02) 743-5829 Monday to Saturday, 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Distributed by: SMARTY TOYS
If it's not from SMARTY, It's definitely FAKE!

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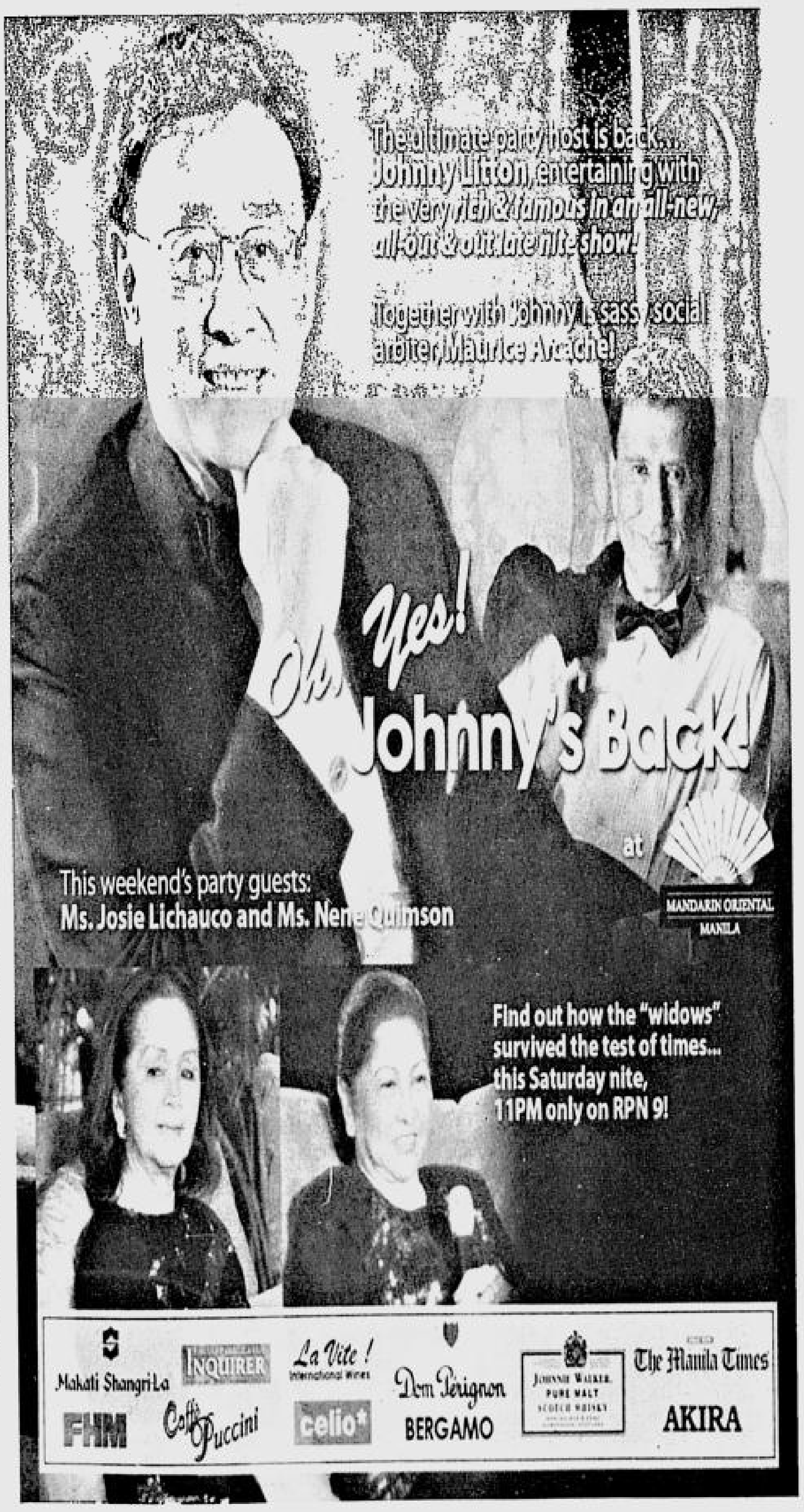
Also brought to you by: Junior Inquirer, Metrobank Fun Savers Club, Toy World at SM Department Stores, LA Gear Socks, SM Supermalls
Available at all leading Department Stores Nationwide



The ultimate party host is back...
Johnny Litton, entertaining with the very rich & famous in an all-new, all-out & out late nite show!
Together with Johnny is sassy social arbiter, Maurice Arcache!
Oh, Yes! Johnny's Back!
at MANDARIN ORIENTAL MANILA
This weekend's party guests:
Ms. Josie Lichauco and Ms. Nene Quimson
Find out how the "widows" survived the test of times... this Saturday nite, 11PM only on RPN 9!
Makati Shangri-La
INQUIRER
La Vite! International Wines
Dom Pérignon
Johnnie Walker Pure Malt Scotch Whisky
The Manila Times
FHM
Caffè Puccini
celio*
BERGAMO
AKIRA

AMBIANCE ONE

Fine furniture for discriminating shoppers

By Joel V. Nigos

DISCRIMINATING furniture shoppers always take lots of considerations when buying furnishings for their home.

They know that their choices of furnishings will have an impact on their quality of life at home-be it in the bedroom, living room or dining room. They also understand that their household furnishings define how comfortably they will eat, sleep, work, relax, entertain or enjoy life as a whole.

Their choices also go as far as knowing value for money. They are always in search of what's the best but are just willing to pay the right price for them.

Ambiance One Fine Furniture has all these in mind when it recently launched its showrooms at Level 6 of Shangri-La Mall in Mandaluyong City and at the Home Buddies

FURNITURE/ H2

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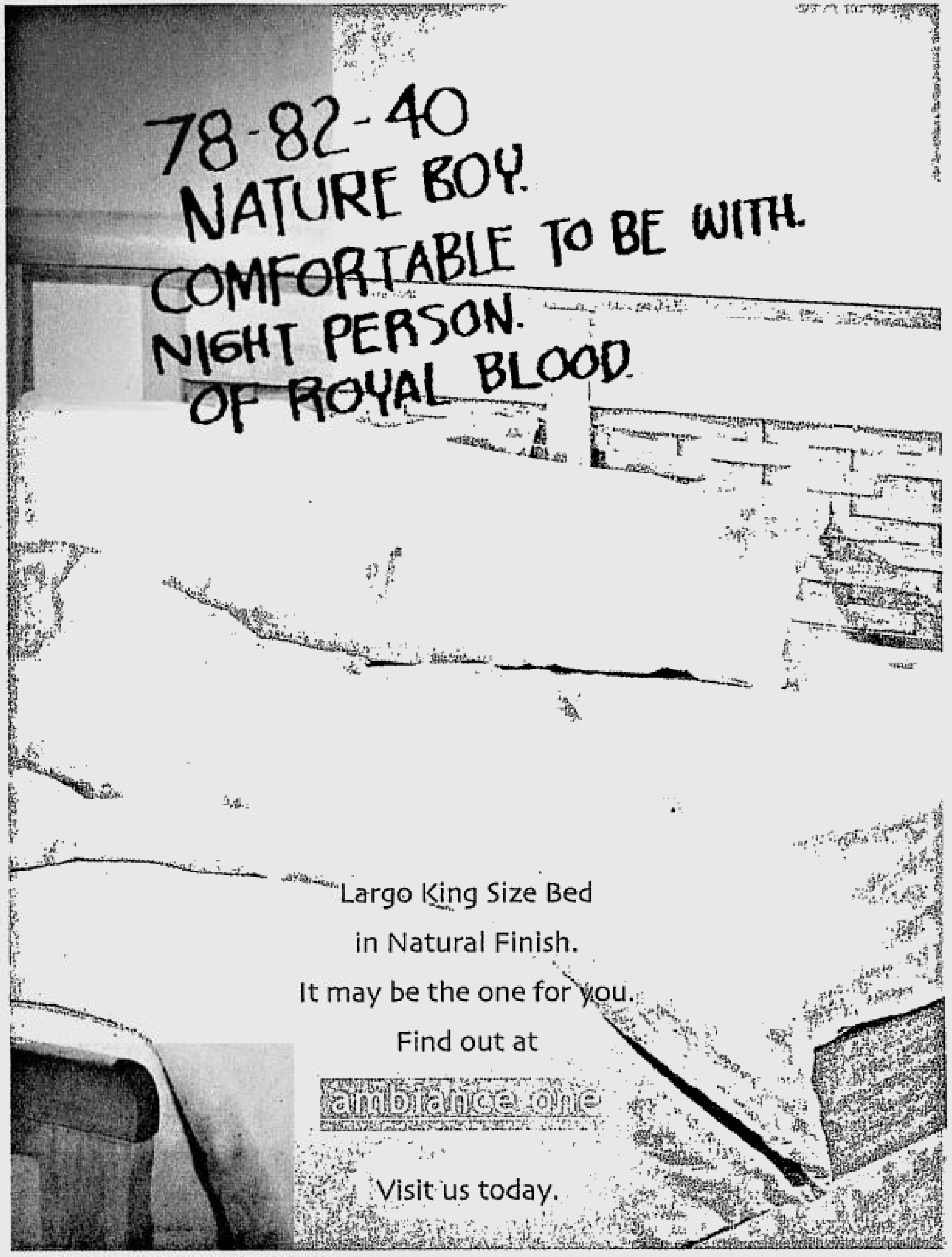
ambiance one

ambiance one

Fine Furniture



Largo King Size Bed
in Natural Finish.
It may be the one for you.
Find out at
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Visit us today.

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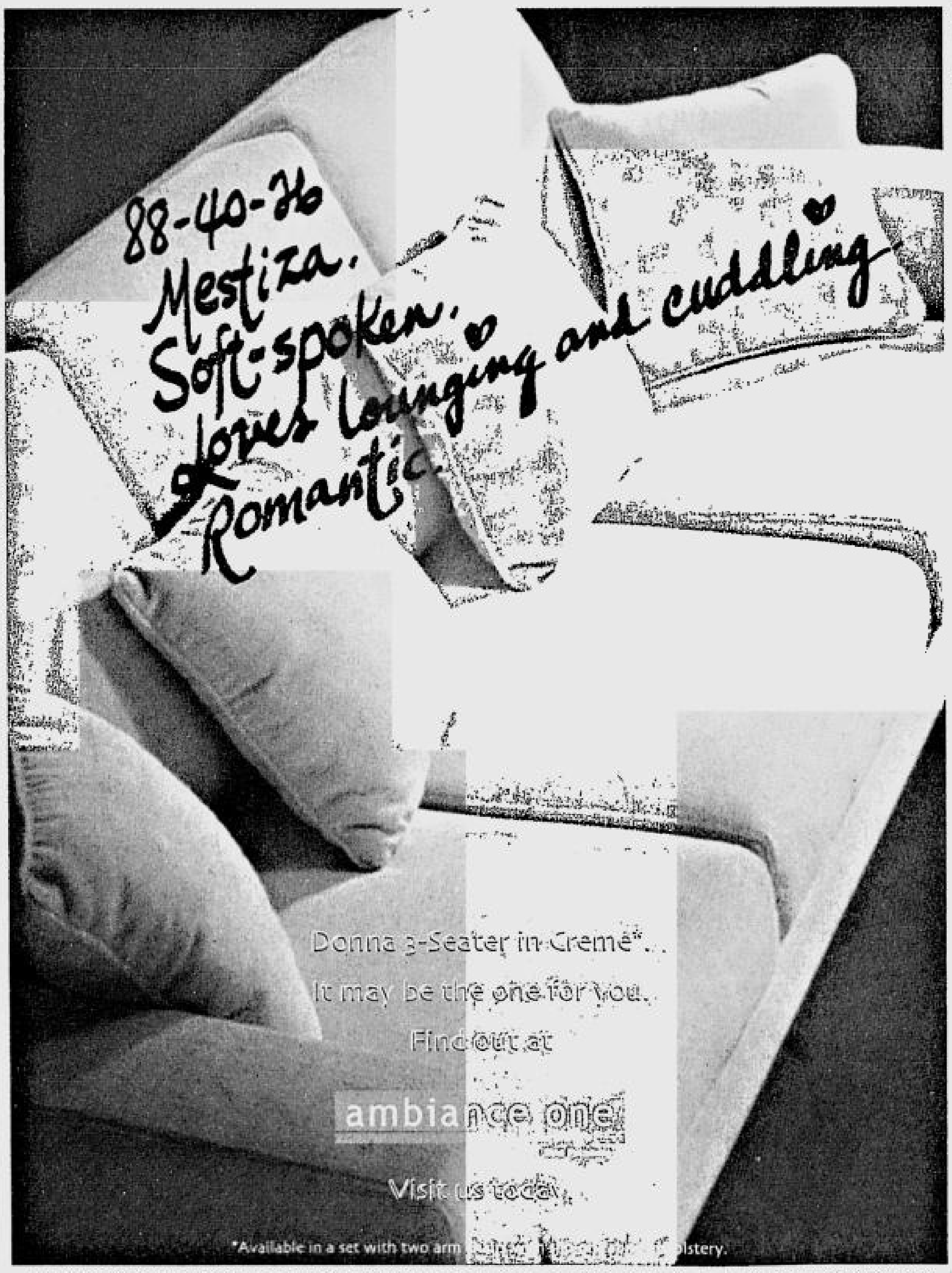

Donna 3-Seater in Creme*.
It may be the one for you.
Find out at
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Visit us today.

*Available in a set with two arm [illegible] upholstery.

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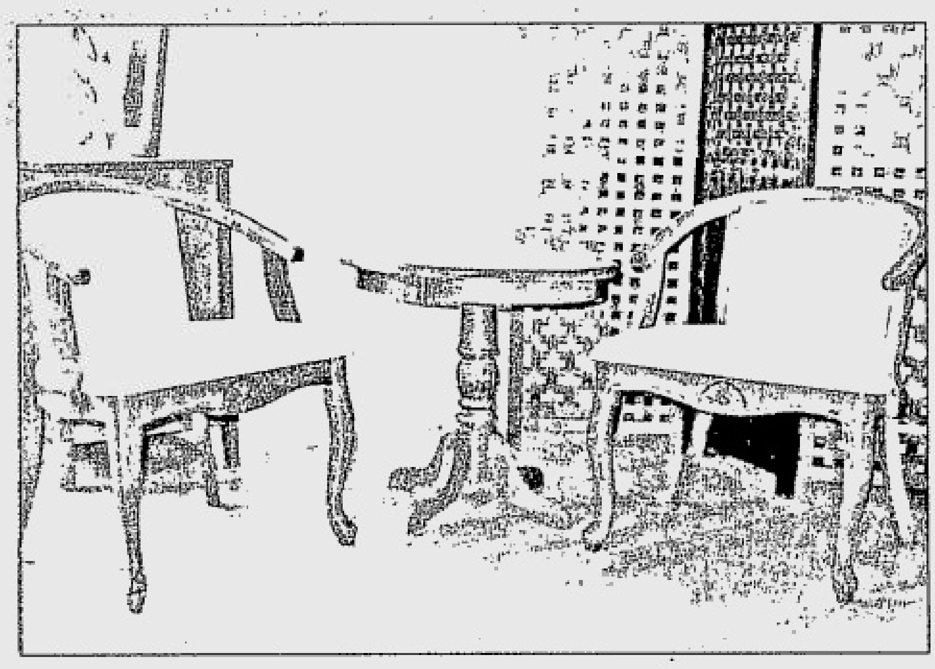
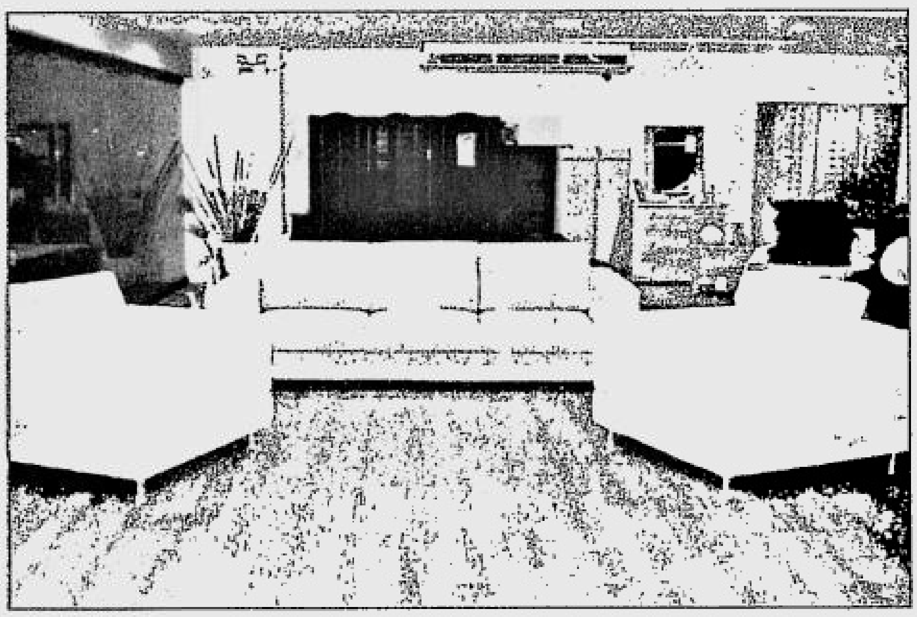


BRISBANE SERIES
Is your motif country living? Then the Brisbane Series of furniture will be a great choice. Whether bedroom, living room or dining room, you have a full range of choices among these collections. The Brisbane Series even offers a 3-piece tea set that will surely make a nice accent for that special nook in your home.



CAPS SOFA SET
Your sofa set serves as the centerpiece of your living room, where you receive guests or simply relax with family members and friends. How comfortable your sofa set makes you and your visitors feel is the most important for choosing one. Caps sofa set follows high standards of comfort, durability and beauty and is available in neutral colors which will easily complement the finishing of every living room.

AMBIANCE ONE

furniture

discriminating

ambiance one
Fine Furniture

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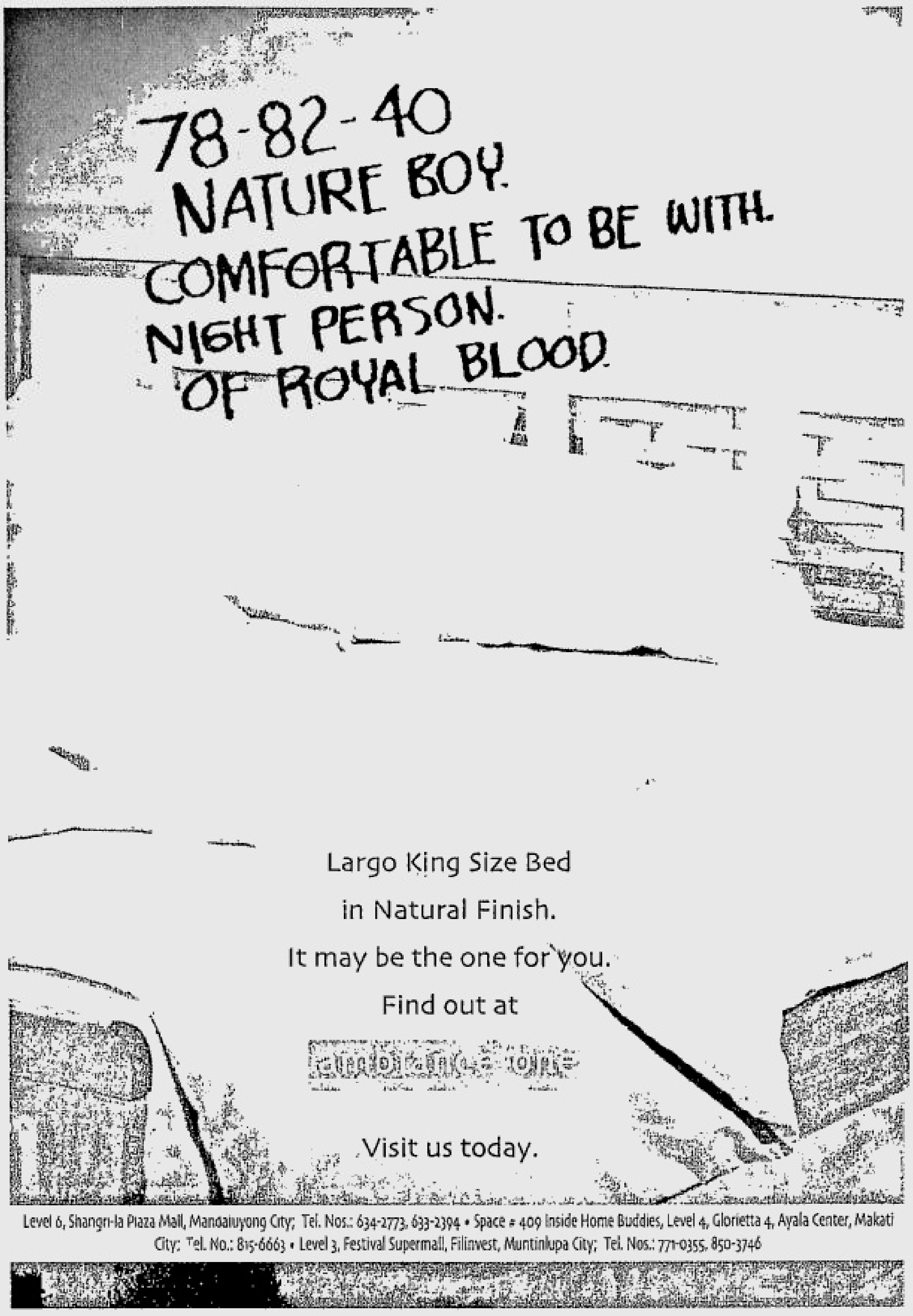
78-82-40
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NIGHT PERSON.
OF ROYAL BLOOD.
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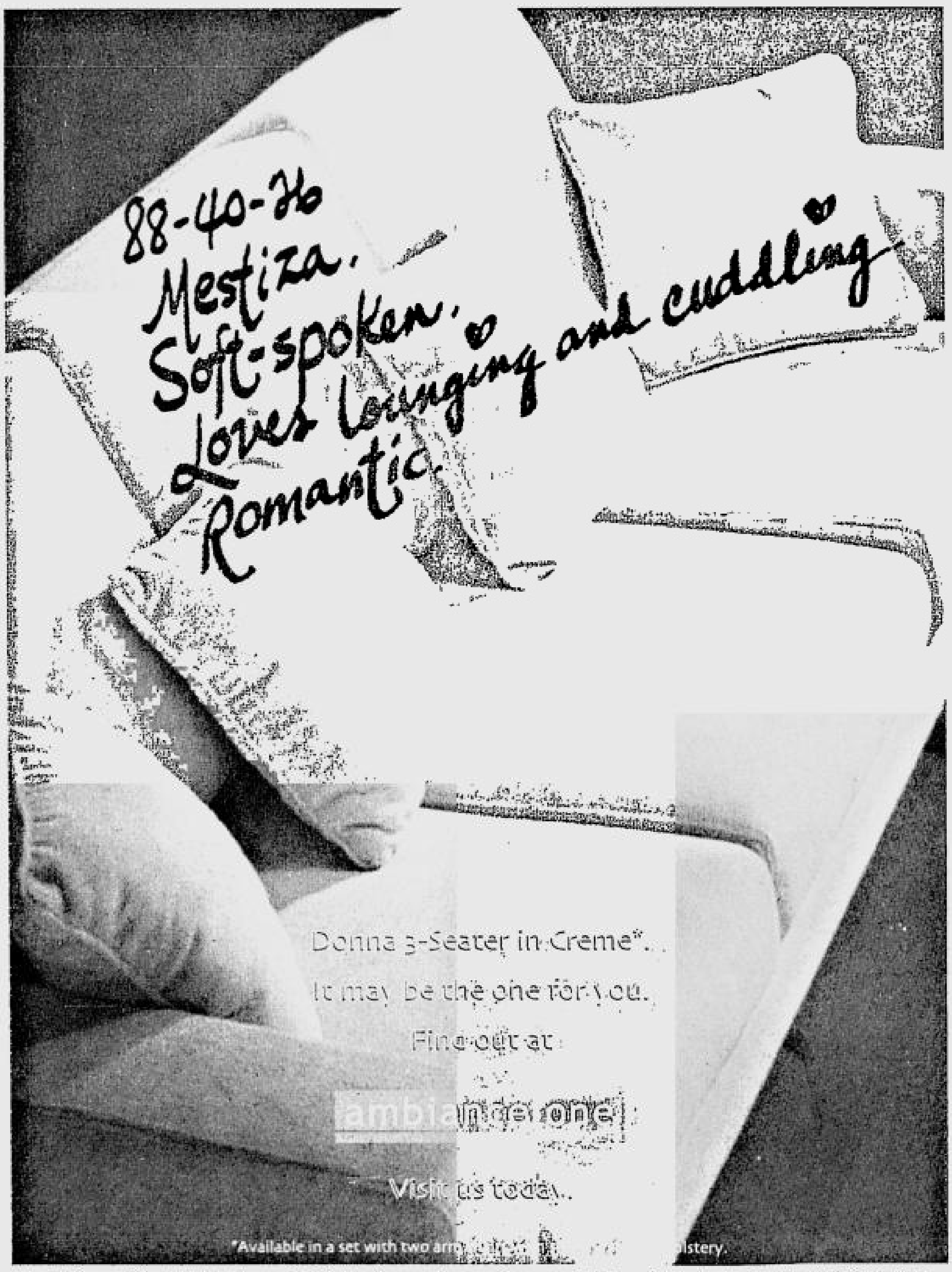
88-40-36
Mestiza.
Soft-spoken.
Loves lounging and cuddling
Romantic.
Donna 3-Seater in Creme*.
It may be the one for you.
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Visit us today.

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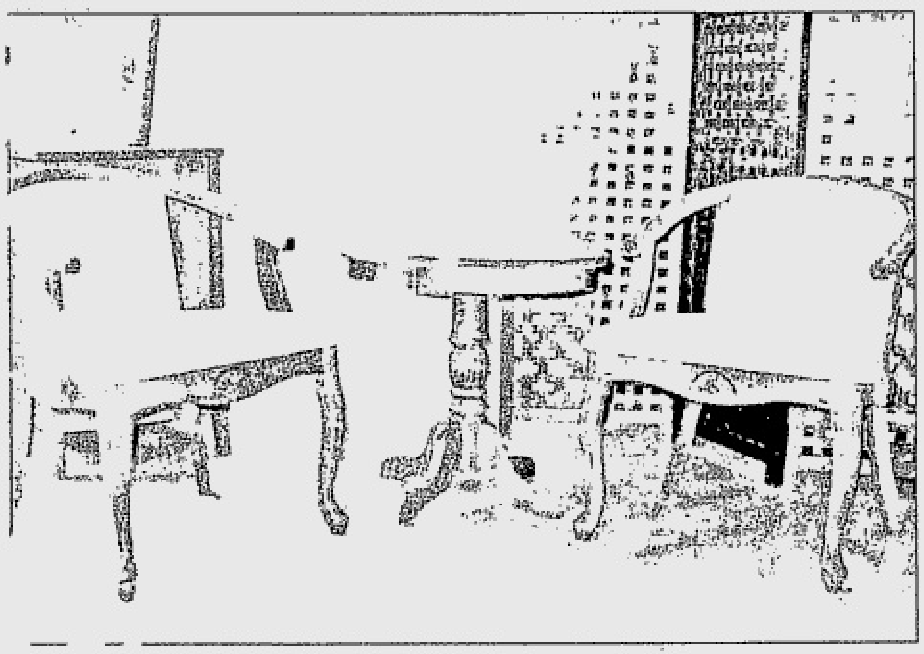

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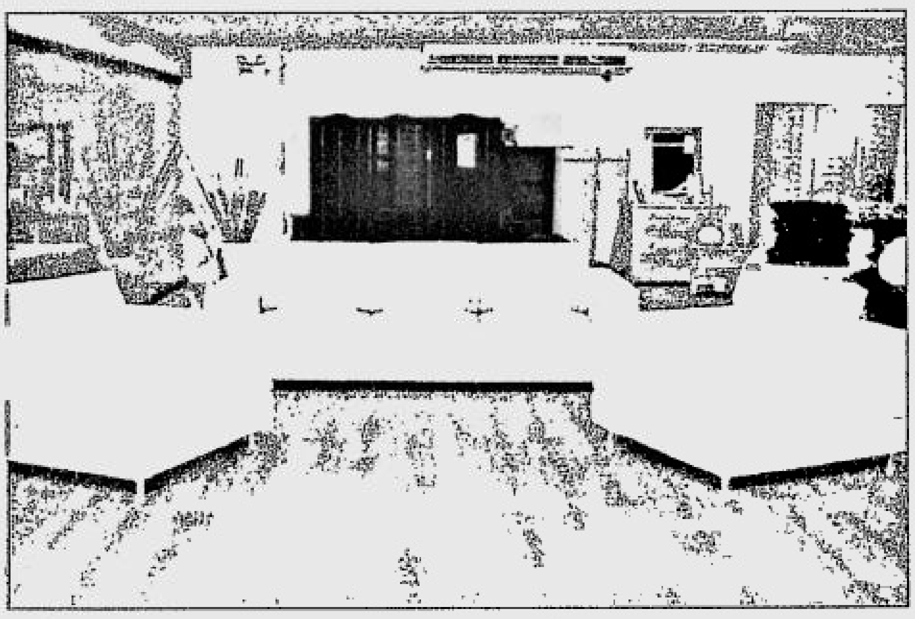

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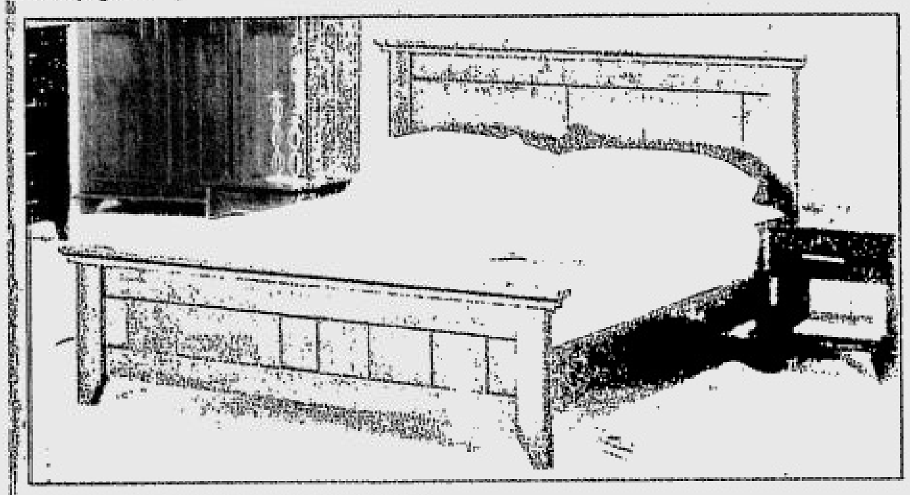
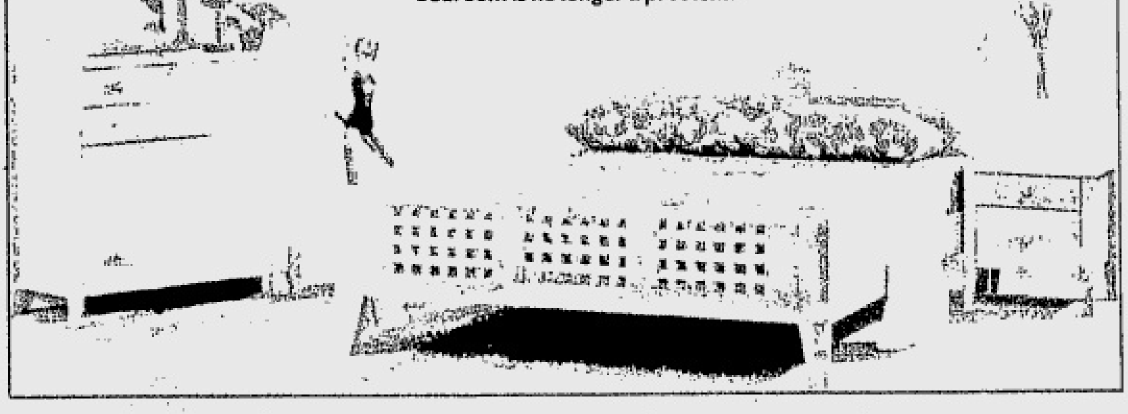
Fine furniture for discriminating shoppers

From page H1

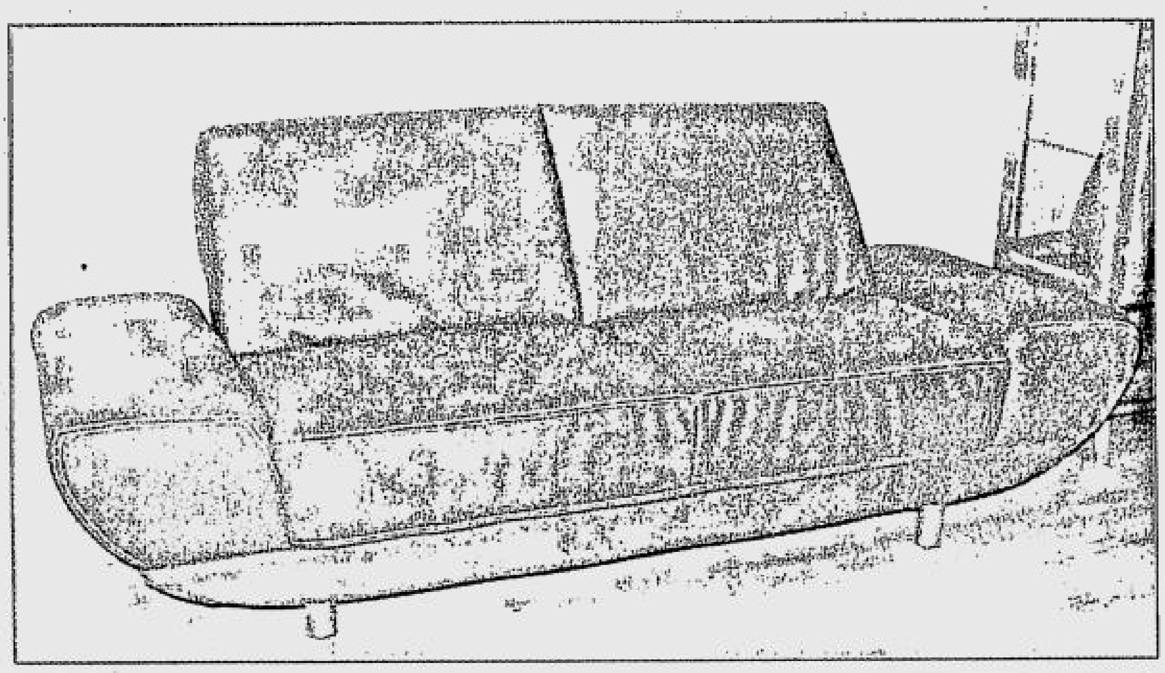


MECHO KING AND QUEEN SIZE BED
Mecho beds are elegantly designed to match your bedrooms and are made out of pure wood. Available in different finishes such as mahogany, walnut, maple, cherry and natural finish.

PONTE KING AND QUEEN SIZE BED
The design is perfect for your room and king size is what you're looking for-but if you were to pick up the assembled item immediately, it won't fit your van or the doorway of your bedroom. Worry no more, because this can be disassembled easily, so getting your dream bed into your bedroom is no longer a problem.



BERLIN SOFA BED
Need that additional, dual-function furniture for the unexpected visitor? The Berlin sofa bed will answer that particular need. Sofa by day and bed by night, the Berlin sofa bed is upholstered in thick PVC leather and available in blue, burgundy, brown, green, black and beige colors.



section located at Level 4 of Glorietta 4 in Makati City. In addition to Ambiance One furniture lines, the latter store also offers premium appliances from GE Appliances and GE Monogram as well as Ariston, Italy's top appliance brand.

With the opening of its showrooms, Ambiance One Fine Furniture is now bringing to shoppers high-end, imported furniture lines that offer enduring quality, durability, craftsmanship at the most competitive prices. This is also where they can compare design, product origin, material, construction and price before making any purchasing decisions.

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All Ambiance One furniture lines are imported and made of pure wood, with sophisticated designs by Japanese and Singaporean specialists who understand trends and pay close attention to detail. Ambiance One stores offer more choices than many others, with furniture lines available in distinctive finishes like walnut, maple, natural, oak and cherry, displayed in full combinations for the appreciation of clients, but without overly dramatic settings. A client buying a furniture item at Ambiance One can find matching pieces from the same theme design, an option which may not be available elsewhere. Plus, Ambiance One stores offer free consultations on interior design.

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MIZUYA 4-DRAWER CHEST WITH MIRROR
A Wenge finish provide that classy touch for any furniture pieces, but it only really works on selected designs like the Mizuya Collections. The intricate grains of the wood are clearly defined in this finish. Queen size bed, Bedside Tables, Console Table and 4-Drawer Chest (with option of complementing mirror) are the complete range of the Mizuya Collections.

Make Time For Friends
ARISTON
TIME TOGETHER

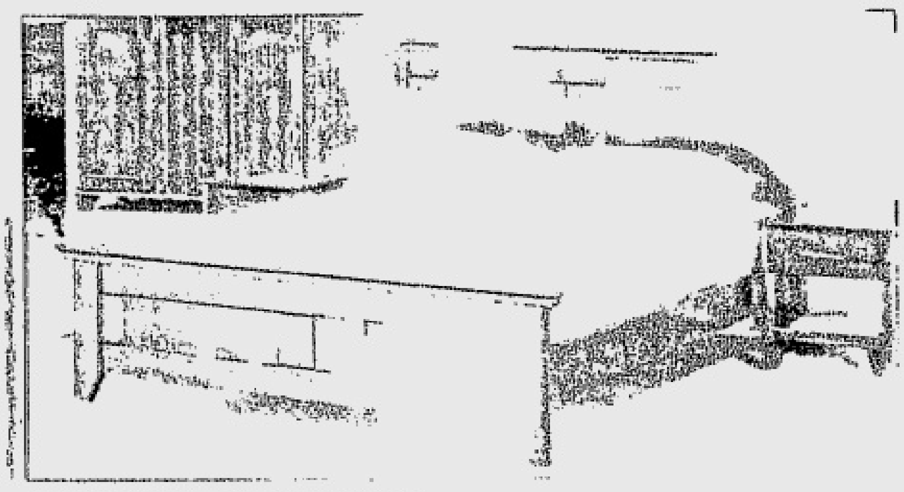
Presenting the new Ariston Cooktops. With stylish designs and superior features, you'll have more time for matters of real importance.

For instance, Ariston's bi-power burners let you regulate power by turning on the 2 rings independently. And at a powerful 5 kW, the burners ensure faster and more even cooking. The induction hobs only produce heat through metal conduction, so you avoid accidents. Double Face Fish burners feature two rotating, elliptical burners, perfect for fish pots and large rectangular pans. The multi-function hobs combine gas burners with electric plate, vittroceramic or barbecue griddle to suit all your cooking needs.

Available in 30cm, 60cm, 70cm, 75cm, or 90cm, gas, electric or multi-function. For more of 100% Italian-made Ariston products visit, any of the following showrooms.
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA Level 4, Tel. no. 631-8282 • **SM MEGAMALL** 5th Floor Building B, Tel. no. 633-9953
GLORIETTA MALL Glorietta 4, Tel no. 887-0075 • **CYBER MALL** Eastwood, Libis, Tel. no. 687-1566 • **MC HOME DEPOT** Fort Bonifacio, Tel. no. 815-8875

Fine furniture for discriminating shoppers

From page H1



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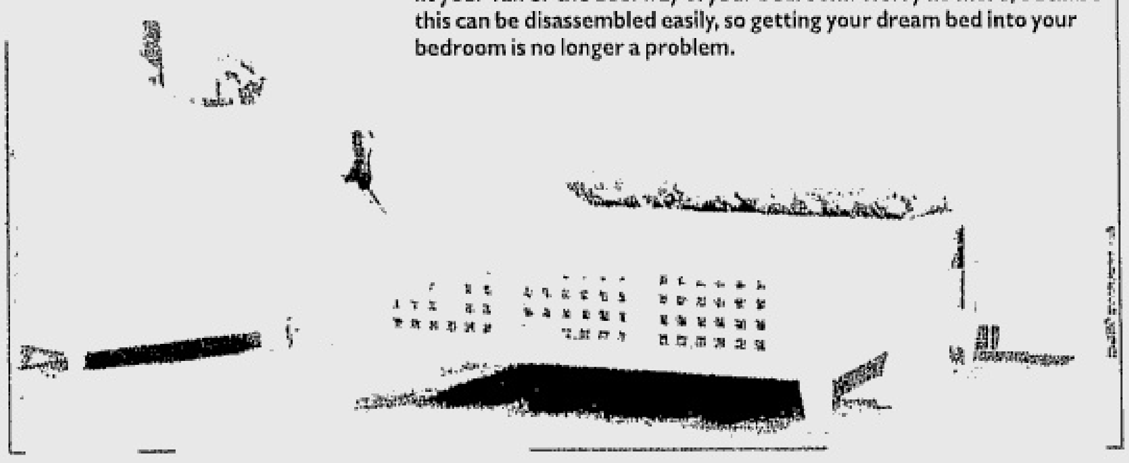

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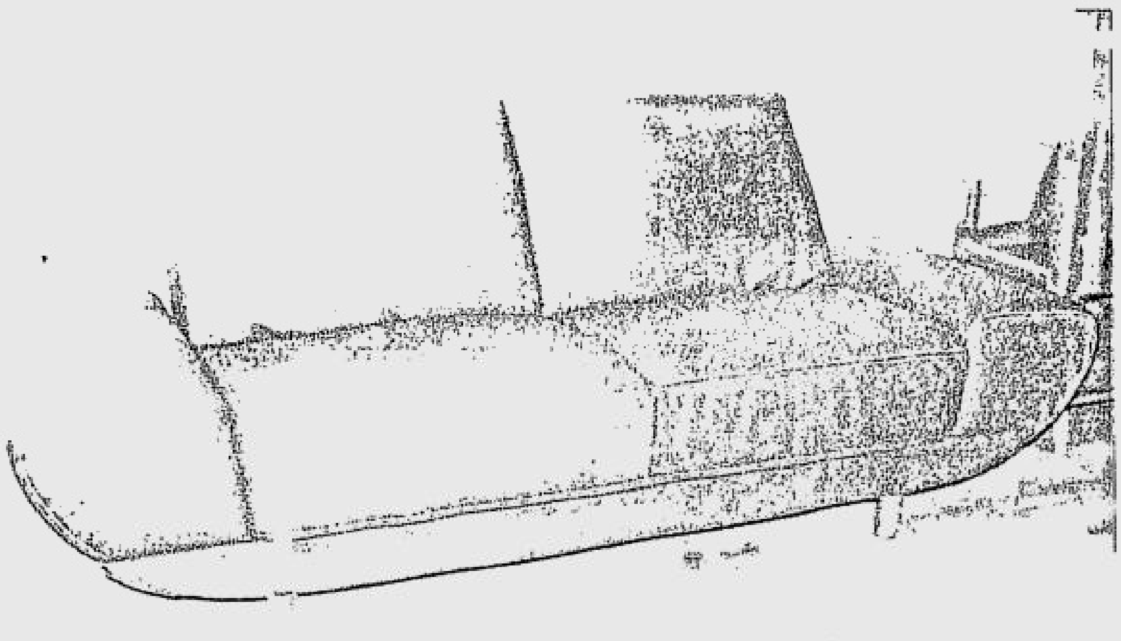

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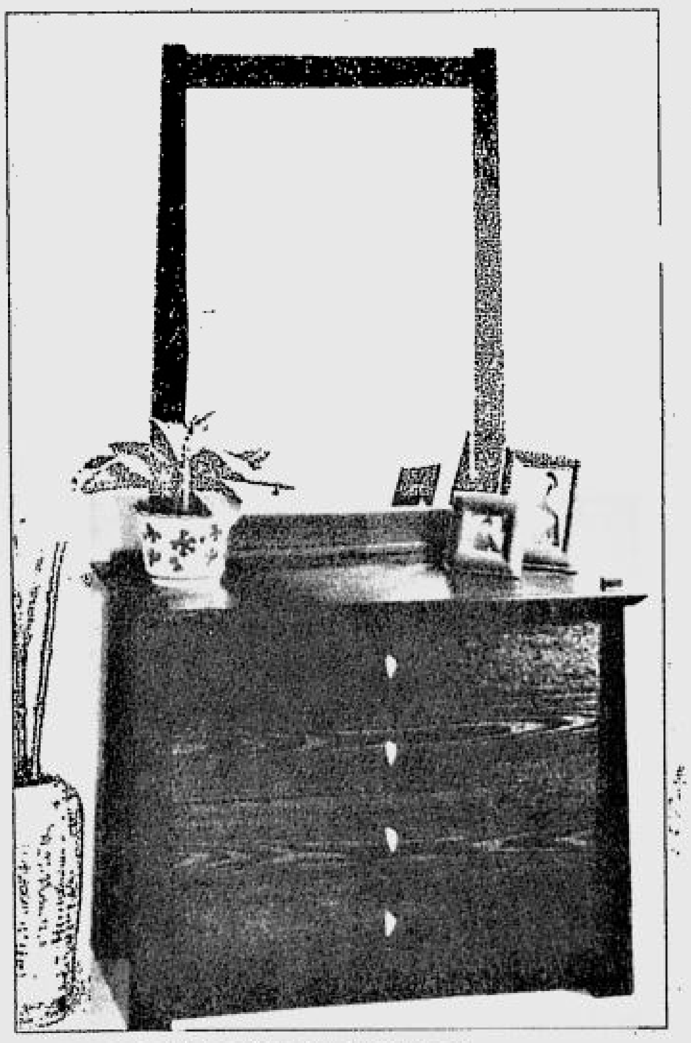

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GE and Ariston showcase launched at Glorietta 4

ONE of the newest destinations for shoppers who look for enduring quality and value in high-end appliances is the new GE and Ariston showcase recently launched at Glorietta 4 at the Ayala Center in Makati City. Among the distinguished guests who graced the store's opening were officers of the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP), officers of the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers (PIID), officermembers of the Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA) and executives from Ayala Land.

Located at Level 4 in the Home Buddies section across the movie theaters, the showcase features top-of-the-line GE Appliances including the ultra-high grade GE Monogram line and the latest Italian household products by Ariston.

The most preferred appliance brand in the US today, GE Appliances are also the clear choice of Philippine consumers when it won the prestigious Platinum Reader's Digest SuperBrand Award for Refrigeration in 2002 and 2003. The Glorietta 4 showcase features the most advanced GE refrigerators, chest freezers, gas and electric ranges, washing machines, microwave ovens and wine chillers. There, you can even order items from the US-made GE Profile line, including built-in products such as Advantium and convecntion ovens, cooktops, warming drawers and other products. The very top of the line GE Monogram appliances, which is used in the penthouse and most other units of Donald Trump's residential building in New York, and at the Trump World Tower, can also be viewed at the showcase.

Also featured at the showcase are high-end household products by Ariston, Italy's No. 1 brand. The store features the latest in Italian kitchen design by Ariston: stainless steel cooktops with the all-new anti-scratch surface; induction electric ceramic hobs that conduct heat through the ordinary metal surfaces only, increasing safety because you can touch it and not get burned; X-line Professional series cooktops with five high-power burners and heavy dustty cast iron pan support; the latest multi-function hobs offering various combinations of burner types such as dual vittroceramic burners, fish burners, bi-power and triple-ring gas burners with heavy cast iron pan support; and the latest range hood designs with the highest suction capacities of up to 900 cu. m./hour. Ariston appliances reveal design quality that's second to none, and will provide your kitchen with superior and stylish functionality.

With various payment options available and with major credit cards accepted, the GE and Ariston showcase at Glorietta 4 provides the best combination of quality and value in premium appliances, thus giving you, as a discerning shopper, the greatest satisfaction for your money.

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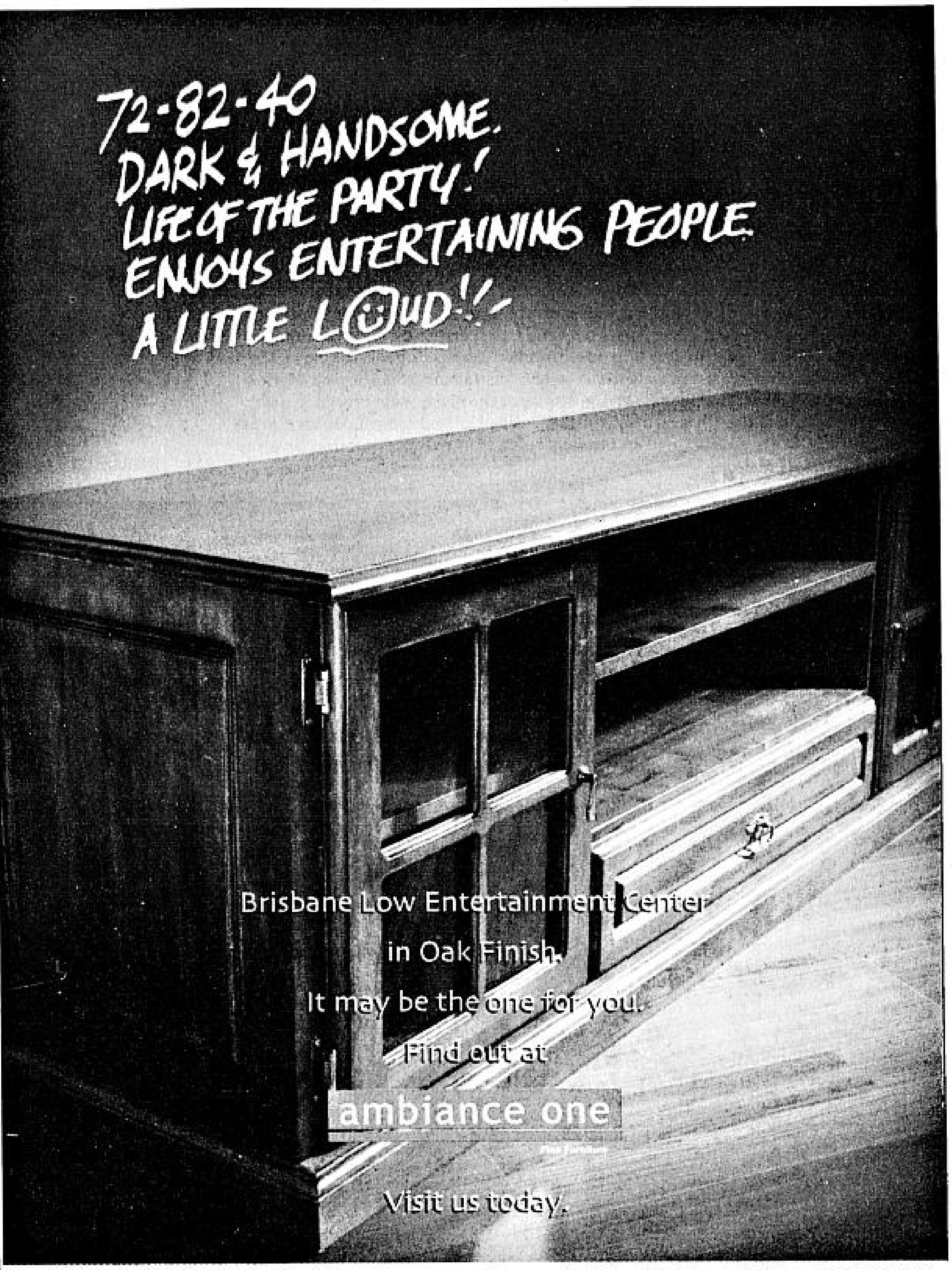

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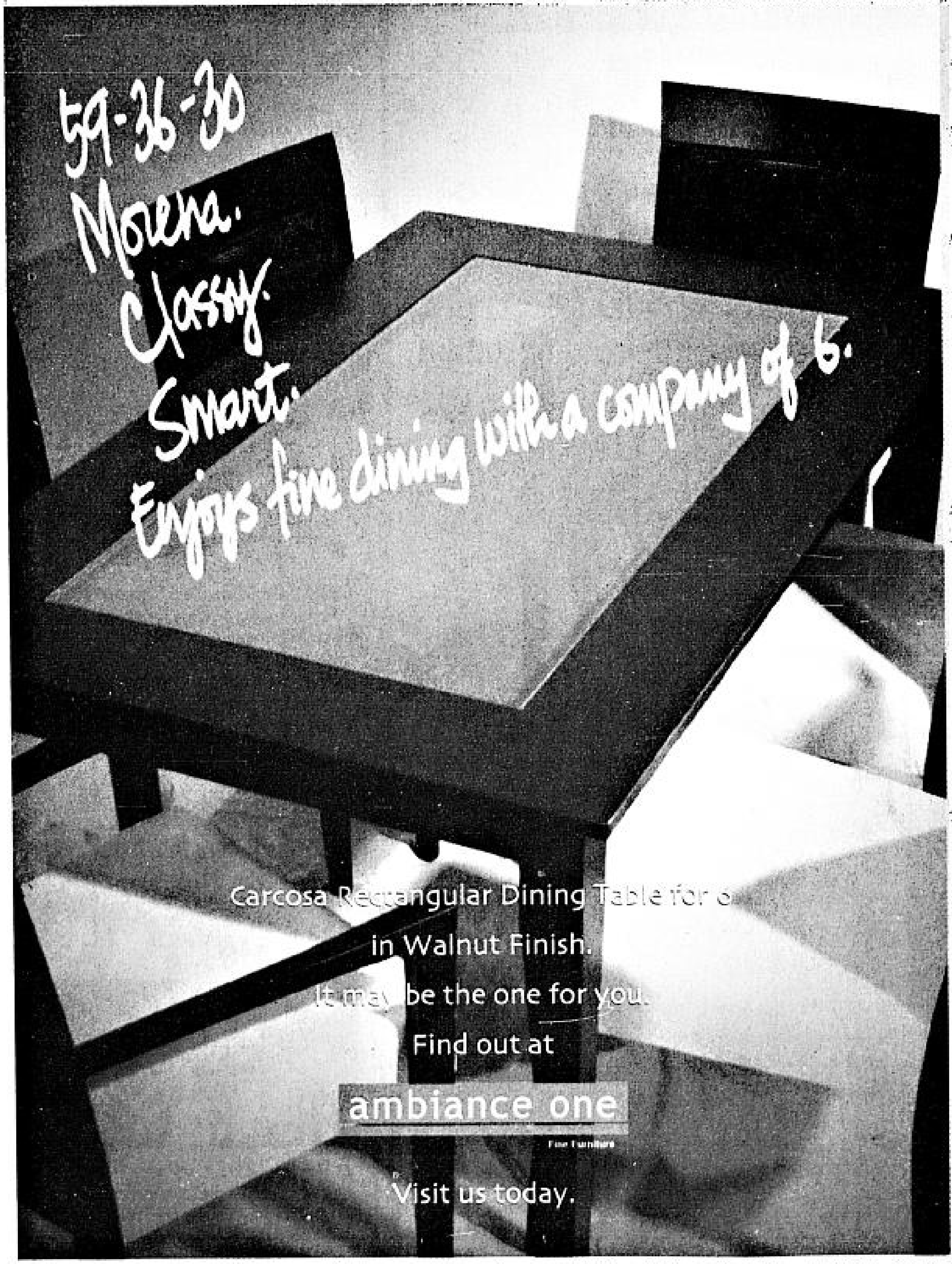
59-36-30
Morena.
Classy.
Smart.
Enjoys fine dining with a company of 6.
Carcosa Rectangular Dining Table for 6
in Walnut Finish.
It may be the one for you.
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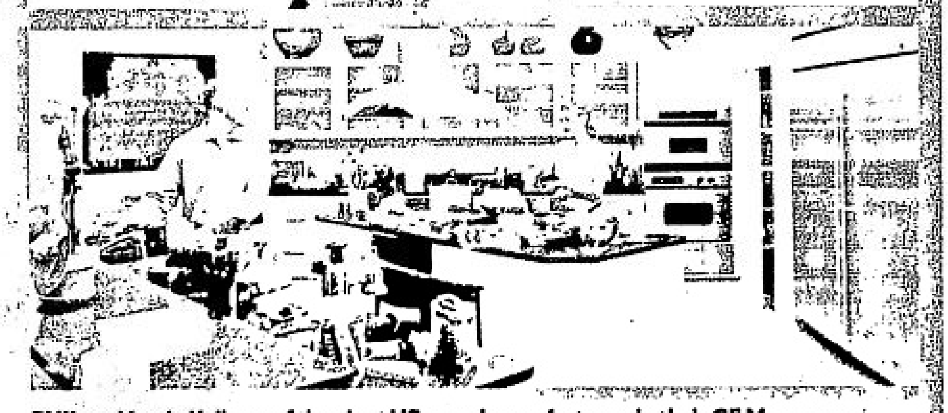
THE KELLOGG'S, owner of the giant US cereal product, in their Sarasota home with their Hatteras yacht. Monogram appliances from GE are preferred by the US' highest end market such as this real-life couple.



PHIL and Jamie Kellogg, of the giant US cereal manufacturer, in their GE Monogram kitchen in Sarasota, Florida. Their appliances include Monogram's Advantium and wall ovens, all-gas cooktop, warming drawer, 22 cuft all-ref with a 22 cuff all freezer, and a European style hood. The same Monogram appliances are showcased in the newly opened GE showroom located on the 4th level of Glorietta 4 (inside Home Buddies) and on the 5th level of SM Megamall Bldg. B (tel. nos. 887-0075, 633-9953.)

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[illegible] and [illegible] showcase launched at [illegible]

ONE of the newest destinations for shoppers who look for enduring quality and value in high-end appliances is the new GE and Ariston showcase recently launched at Glorietta 4 at the Ayala Center in Makati City. Among the distinguished guests who graced the store's opening were officers of the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP), officers of the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers (PIID), officermembers of the Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA) and executives from Ayala Land.

Located at Level 4 in the Home Buddies section across the movie theaters, the showcase features top-of-the-line GE Appliances including the ultra-high grade GE Monogram line and the latest Italian household products by Ariston.

The most preferred appliance brand in the US today, GE Appliances are also the clear choice of Philippine consumers when it won the prestigious Platinum Reader's Digest SuperBrand Award for Refrigeration in 2002 and 2003. The Glorietta 4 showcase features the most advanced GE refrigerators, chest freezers, gas and electric ranges, washing machines, microwave ovens and wine chillers. There, you can even order items from the US-made GE Profile line, including built-in products such as Advantium and convecntion ovens, cooktops, warming drawers and other products. The very top of the line GE Monogram applinnces, which is used in the penthouse and most other units of Donald Trump's residential building in New York, and at the Trump World Tower, can also be viewed at the showcase.

Also featured at the showcase are high-end household products by Ariston, Italy's No. 1 brand. The store features the latest in Italian kitchen design by Ariston: stainless steel cooktops with the all-new anti-scratch surface; induction electric ceramic hobs that conduct heat through the ordinary metal surfaces only, increasing safety because you can touch it and not get burned; X-line Professional series cooktops with five high-power burners and heavy dustty cast iron pan support; the latest multi-function hobs offering various combinations of burner types such as dual vittroceramic burners, fish burners, bi-power and triple-ring gas burners with heavy cast iron pan support; and the latest range hood designs with the highest suction capacities of up to 900 cu. m./hour. Ariston appliances reveal design quality that's second to none, and will provide your kitchen with superior and stylish functionality.

With various payment options available and with major credit cards accepted, the GE and Ariston showcase at Glorietta 4 provides the best combination of quality and value in premium appliances, thus giving you, as a discerning shopper, the greatest satisfaction for your money.

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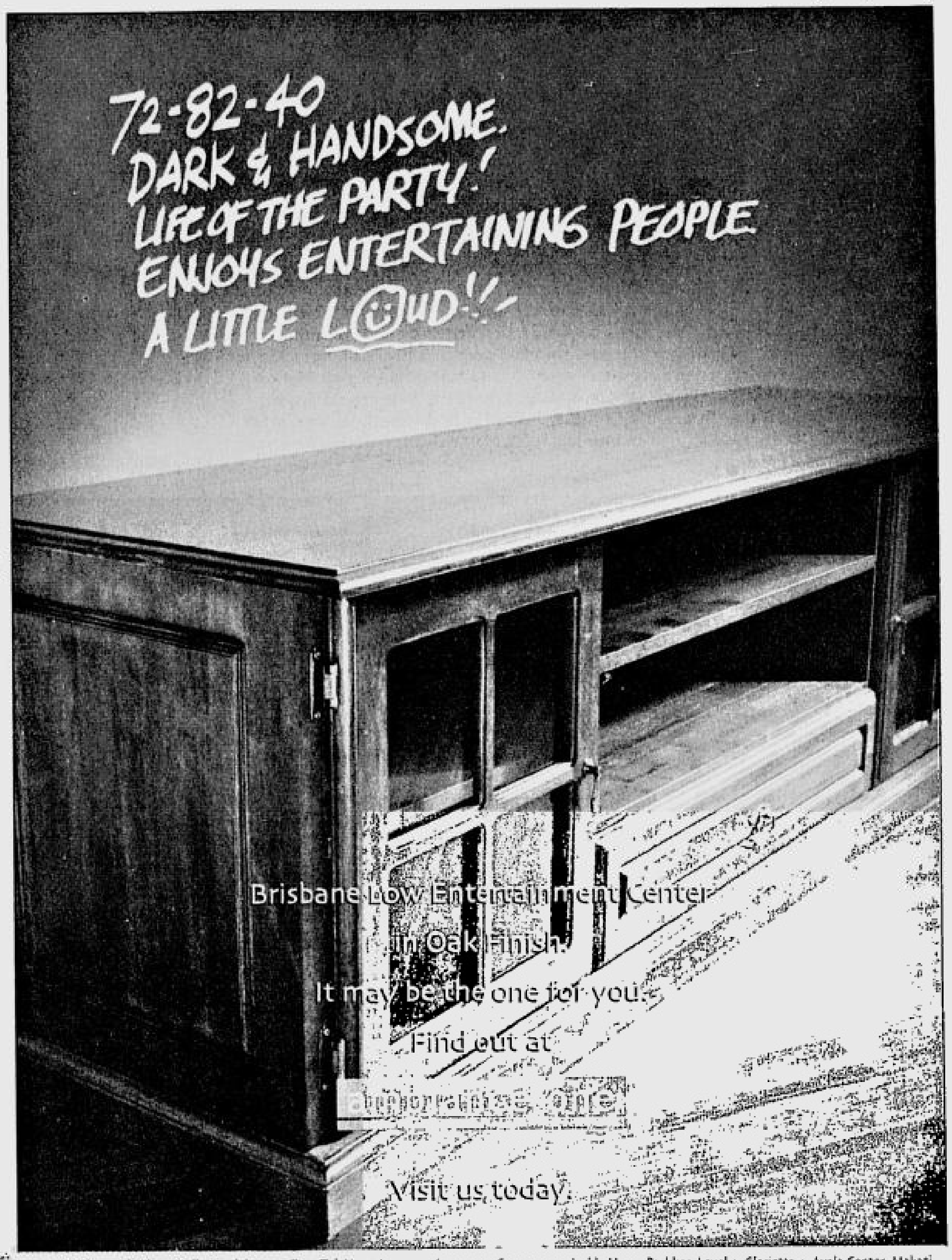

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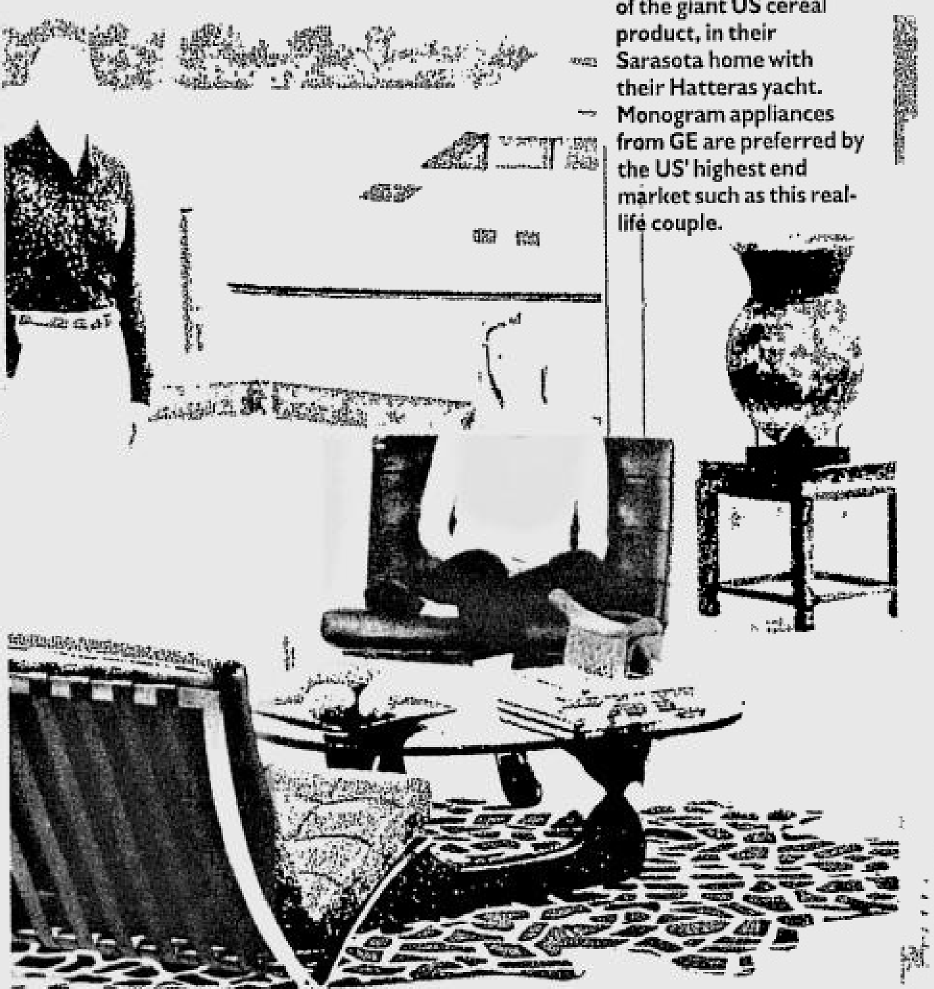
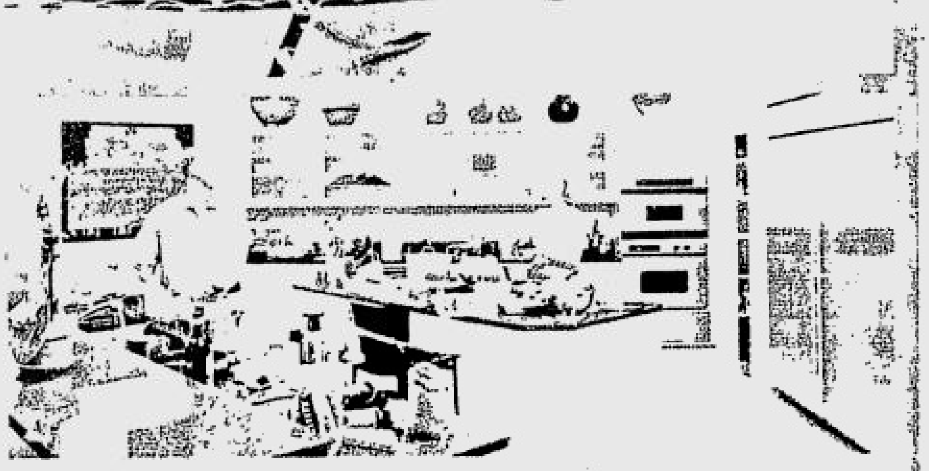
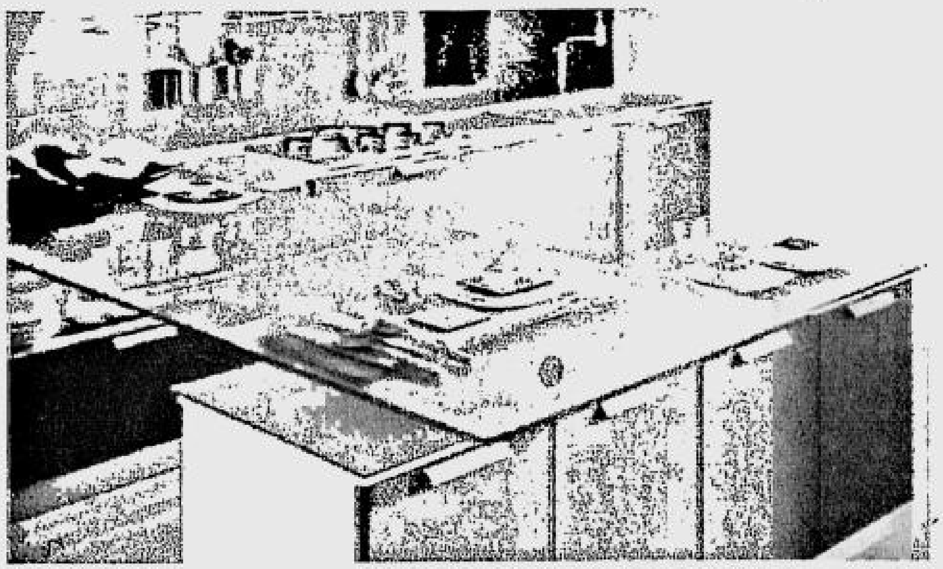


THE KELLOGG'S, owner of the giant US cereal product, in their Sarasota home with their Hatteras yacht. Monogram appliances from GE are preferred by the US' highest end market such as this real-life couple.

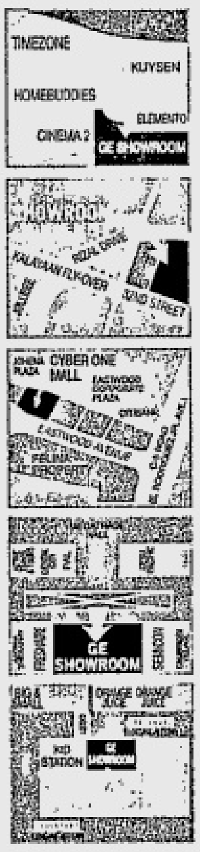


PHIL and Jamie Kellogg, of the giant US cereal manufacturer, in their GE Monogram kitchen in Sarasota, Florida. Their appliances include Monogram's Advantium and wall ovens, all-gas cooktop, warming drawer, 22 cuft all-ref with a 22 cuff all freezer, and a European style hood. The same Monogram appliances are showcased in the newly opened GE showroom located on the 4th level of Glorietta 4 (inside Home Buddies) and on the 5th level of SM Megamall Bldg. B (tel. nos. 887-0075, 633-9953.)



THIS kitchen's stainless steel tech hob with the unique square knobs, burner caps and the exclusive 'square' cast iron pan support is crowned by its tech range hood counterpart with digital display. Combined with the chic and hip kitchen cabinetry, the resulting look is modish and comfortable. The latest and exclusive designs from Italian appliance giant Merloni, maker of Ariston. Ariston appliances are on display at the newly inaugurated Ariston showroom located at the 4th level of Glorietta 4 (inside Home Buddies), 5th level of SM Megamall Bldg. B, 4th level Shangri-La Plaza Mall, MC Home Depot Fort Bonifacio and Cybermall in Eastwood City Libis.

INSIDE their Newport mansion in Rhode Island, Richard Wurman and Gloria Nagy enjoy their GE Monogram kitchen.



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Merloni in 2003: Another year of sustained growth

MILAN - With an impressive 21 percent growth in sales, 2003 was another record year for the company, thanks to its growth in both Eastern and Western European markets. Major manufacturing and sales efforts more than offset the negative effect of the weakening sterling and fierce price competition. It was also an important year for the consolidation of businesses joining Merloni Elettrodomestici under the latest acquisitions. Successful integration was also due to optimum deployment of the competencies that the company can field worldwide.

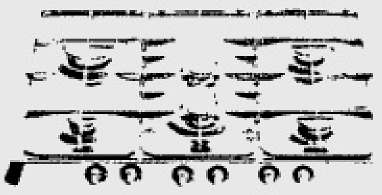
Aside from the 2003 sales growth figure, other provisional figures for the year include operating margin (21 percent, or 8.2 percent of sales) and profit before tax (19 percent).

To meet growing demand (up 14.4 percent in Eastern and 3.3 in Western Europe) the company started building new facilities to manufacture fridges, cookers and washing machines in Poland and Russia, to come on line by the end of this year. When fully up and running, these plants will turn out three million appliances a year.

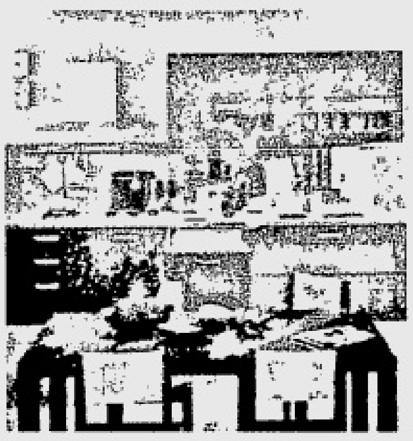
"Over the coming years competition will get even fiercer - said Vittorio Merloni - we're ready to deal with any challenge to sustain the growth rate we've achieved over the past few years".

Merloni is Italy's leading appliance manufacturer with an average of close to 30 percent share across various appliance segments based on GfK and Nielsen research results. It is the second largest company in Italy next only to the FIAT-Alitalia group.

In the Philippines, Merloni's leading brand Ariston is distributed exclusively by Fabriano Spa, Inc. (tel. nos. 887-0075; 631-8282).



CRAZY about stainless? Ariston's new 70-cm cook top with six gas burners and all stainless steel pan support will surely brighten the entire kitchen. Even the burner caps are in stainless steel for that pure, pristine stainless look. And with its double-face fish burner-even the biggest fish is now easier to cook.



WOOD tones blend stylishly well with stainless steel. Take for example this kitchen's walnut cabinetry combined with the stainless oven, range hood and multi-function hob. The contrast between the warm wood finish and the industrial stainless steel provides an interesting, refreshing and practical contrast.